

Brad Pitt  
at his  
best in  
Button



pg 14

**Next edition**

Metro will not be publishing on Christmas Day. The next edition will appear on Friday, Dec. 26.



Season's Greetings from Metro Calgary



Season's Greetings from Metro Montreal



Season's Greetings from Metro Toronto



Season's Greetings from Metro Lisbon



Season's Greetings from Metro New York



Season's Greetings from Metro Ottawa



Season's Greetings from Metro Stockholm



**PEACE ON EARTH**  
Metro International wishes everyone a safe & happy holiday!



Season's Greetings from Metro Helsinki



Season's Greetings from Metro Philadelphia



Season's Greetings from Metro Copenhagen



Season's Greetings from Metro Paris




Season's Greetings from Metro Halifax



Season's Greetings from Metro Edmonton



Season's Greetings from Metro Vancouver



**Christmas Lobster Specials!**

Live Commercial Grade Lobsters	Live #1 Quality Marketsize Lobsters
<b>4.99lb</b> (1-1.5lb Avg) (2 Claw)	<b>5.99lb</b> (1-4lb Avg) (2 Claw)
Frozen Cooked Lobster Meat	Live Jumbo Lobsters
Claw & Knuckle 14.99 / 11.3 oz tin	Broken Meat 13.99 / 11.3 oz tin
	<b>4.49lb</b> (6lb +) (2 Claw)

**WE ARE OPEN BOXING DAY OPEN FROM 9AM-5PM!**

Check out PAGE 3 for other great food ideas for your Christmas Feast and our Holiday Hours!



**FISHERMAN'S MARKET**  
EST. 1948  
Fine Quality Seafood & Lobster

Fisherman's Market 607 Bedford Hwy. 443-3474 HOURS: Mon. - Sat. 9am-6pm, Sun. 11am-6pm Gift Certificates & Party Trays Available



Starting at 12:01 a.m. on Christmas Day, bridge tolls on both the Macdonald and the MacKay bridges will be free. It's an annual tradition that started in 1983. **METRO HALIFAX**

# Local



## Take the kids to camp

Will the kids be going stir crazy by Saturday? Take them to the Halifax Rainmen basketball camp Dec. 27, from 10 a.m. to noon, at Citadel High School in Halifax. It's free for eight to 15-year-olds and no pre-registration is necessary. **METRO HALIFAX**

## Malls packed with last-minute shoppers

JENNIFER TAPLIN  
jennifer.taplin@metronews.ca

**Shoppers lucky enough to find a parking spot at the malls got in some last-minute Christmas shopping yesterday.**

"Every year, it's last minute," said JJ McDonald of Bedford. He added he doesn't leave it to the last minute because it's fun, he's just a procrastinator.

The dad and his two kids were manoeuvring

through the crowds to pick out a few gifts at the Halifax Shopping Centre yesterday.

"We're hoping to wrap it up today, but it's not looking good. We're running out of time here."

MacDonald said he'll definitely be back shopping today.

Elisa Whitehead said she expected to see a lot more guys like MacDonald at the mall yesterday.

"I love it, that's why I'll be coming back (on

Christmas Eve) to watch all the men walk around with those deer-in-the-headlight looks."

The crowds don't bother her at all, she said, especially when she's shopping for her granddaughter's first Christmas. "We're getting a piano, she likes music," she said as she stood in line to get her granddaughter's picture taken with Santa.

She said she tried not to go overboard with Christmas shopping this year.



Shoppers head down the escalator at the Halifax Shopping Centre yesterday. Last-minute shoppers packed the malls to pick up their remaining Christmas gifts.

## metro life panel

### Top 2008 events

- Karissa Boudreau, 12, was found murdered on the banks of Bridgewater's LaHave River Feb. 13. Her mom, Penny Boudreau, was charged.
- On June 13, an out-of-control forest fire in the Cole Harbour area forced more than 4,000 people to evacuate their homes.
- Alexa McDonough leader of the provincial NDP for 14 years, announced her retirement June 3.
- More than 200 people were stranded at Halifax airport Aug. 29 when Zoom Airlines filed for bankruptcy.
- In November, police said a series of shootings were part of a drug war between the Melvin and Marriott families of Spryfield.
- Oct. 2, the RCMP were called to investigate a program that charged immigrants \$130,000 for fast-track admission to Canada.
- Halifax regional council nixed the controversial Waterside Centre proposal in a tie, 9-9 vote.
- On Jan. 24, quadruplets were born to Joseph and Christa MacKinnon.
- Roberta Jollimore and her son, Greg Jollimore, 52, were found dead in their Willow Street home May 26. Police later confirmed it was a murder-suicide.
- Eight people were thrown into Halifax Harbour Sept. 18 when a controversial fire-fighting boat flipped.

AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL

## NOTICE: Christmas Day and New Year's Day Collection & Processing Services Garbage/Organics/Recyclables

Residents of Halifax Regional Municipality are advised that there will be **no** garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2008.

Collection services for that day will be provided on the following **Saturday, December 27, 2008**. Regular municipal collection services will be provided on Boxing Day, December 26, 2008.

There will be **no** garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2009. Collection services for that day will be provided on the following **Saturday, January 3, 2009**.

**No Collection** Christmas Day  
Thursday, **December 25, 2008**

**Collection will occur** the following **Saturday,**  
**December 27, 2008**

**No Collection** New Year's Day  
Thursday, **January 1, 2009**

**Collection will occur** the following **Saturday,**  
**January 3, 2009**

**Otter Lake Facility Closed**  
Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>  
New Year's Day, Thursday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
Sunday, Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>

**Otter Lake Facility Open**

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> - 7 am to 6 pm

Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> & Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7 am to 7 pm

**HRM Recycling Plant Closed**  
Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>  
New Year's Day, Thursday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>

**HRM Recycling Plant Open**  
Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 am to 6:00 pm  
Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> & Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7:30 am to 6:00 pm

Collection services can begin as early as 7:00 a.m. To ensure collection, residents may place materials curbside the evening prior to collection day. The HRM's residential Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Depot will be **Closed** Saturday, December 27th and Saturday, January 3rd but will be **Open** on Saturday, January 10th, 2009 from 9 am to 4 pm.

### After the Holidays...

- Natural Christmas trees: picked up on your organics collection week; must be free of plastic, tinsel, ornaments, metal rings, nails, stands and plastic tree bags
- Compost or mulch your greenery (boughs, trees, etc.)
- Wreaths with metal wire frame or plastic cord go in your garbage bag
- Recycle paper gift wrap free of ribbons, bows and ornaments; place in a grocery bag
- Non-paper gift wrap and foil wrap: place in your garbage bag
- Corrugated cardboard: tie and bundle for recycling
- Boxboard (shoe and cereal type boxes): place in your green cart
- Recycling/re-use tips: save gift wrap, bows, ribbons, cards, etc....for use next year; give old toys and clothing to a charitable organization

Thank you and have a safe and happy holiday season.  
For more information on HRM's composting and recycling programs, check your 2008 or 2009 collection schedule, visit our website at [www.halifax.ca/wrms](http://www.halifax.ca/wrms) or call 490-4000.



## MacIntosh extradition handled properly: Judge

The extradition of Ernest Fenwick MacIntosh from India in 2006 to face 43 sex-related charges was valid, Nova Scotia's court of appeal has ruled.

MacIntosh, 64, a former Port Hawkesbury hockey coach and businessman, had been working as a telecommunications engineer in India when he was brought back to face the charges. His lawyer, Brian Casey, argued Canadian officials sent evidence to India that would never have been accepted by a Canadian court.

In a decision released yesterday, though, Justice Thomas Cromwell wrote that MacIntosh's extradition was handled properly.

"(MacIntosh's) submission amounts to saying that more

is required when Canada seeks extradition than would be required to arrest the appellant in Canada.

"No authority that I am aware of supports this submission," wrote Cromwell, who will ascend to the Supreme Court of Canada in January.

Casey had argued there wasn't enough identification evidence from one of the alleged victims, but Cromwell — along with Chief Justice Michael MacDonald and Justice Joel Fichaud — nixed that idea, too.

MacIntosh is charged with sexual assault and gross indecency from incidents dating back to the 1970s, when he was living in Port Hawkesbury.

RACHEL BOOMER/METRO HALIFAX

### News in brief

**ESCAPE** A young offender escaped custody from the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville yesterday.

The 17-year-old boy was outside the institution working with construction workers when he allegedly stole a 1999 silver Ford Taurus. The provincial justice department said the boy earned the privilege to work without direct supervision. He was reported missing to the RCMP at around 2:30 p.m. yesterday. RCMP released the licence plate, DHG 616, and are asking anyone who spots the car to call 911 and report it to police. He is a young offender and as such, cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

He was serving time for theft-related offences.

**POWER** About 13,500 people were still without power as a result of Monday's storm that brought winds of around 100 km-h. There were pockets of outages throughout the HRM yesterday as well. About 52 customers in the Pleasant Street-Eastern Passage area were left in the dark at around 6:30 p.m. Monday and the power was expected to be restored at suppertime yesterday, 24 hours later. The First Lake area in Sackville was down, too. A spokeswoman for Nova Scotia Power said they hoped to get the lights back on there by midnight.

JENNIFER TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

## metronews.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

**Check** [metronews.ca](http://metronews.ca) to stay up-to-date over the holidays with news, horoscopes and games

**Video** Stephen Harper's competition for Canadian newsmaker of the year at [metronews.ca/canada](http://metronews.ca/canada)

**Video** Listeria gave food safety a rare star turn in the headlines at [metronews.ca/canada](http://metronews.ca/canada)

**Video** The military defends controversial nighttime raids in Afghanistan at [metronews.ca/canada](http://metronews.ca/canada)

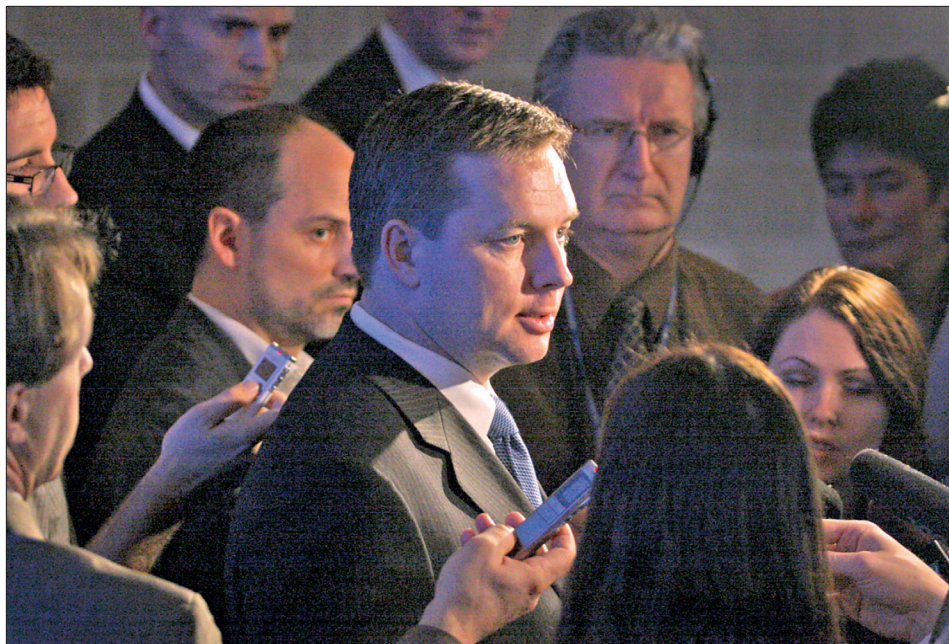




**Restaurant and bar visits up from last year**

Nova Scotians spent 4.1 per cent more eating — and drinking — in restaurants and bars in October 2008 than the year before. **METRO HALIFAX**

local 3



Premier Rodney MacDonald speaks with reporters following the state of the province address earlier this month.

# MacDonald says 2008 a good year

Premier points to pharmacare program

PAUL MCLEOD  
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*This is the final of three segments where Metro talks to each of Nova Scotia's political leaders about the year that was.*

At least Rodney MacDonald can say he didn't have the most tumultuous minority government in Canada in 2008.

It's no secret that an election could be called next spring. MacDonald's first election came just months after taking over from John Hamm. Not only is he hoping to win again, but he's hoping for a majority.

"What happened in Ottawa shows ... you just never know what can happen in a minority government," MacDonald said.

"As a government, especially in times like this, you need to be able to make decisive decisions. You need to be able to know that when there's

**"As a government, especially in times like this, you need to be able to make decisive decisions. You need to be able to know that when there's legislation that needs to be passed it can be passed."**

Premier Rodney MacDonald

legislation that needs to be passed it can be passed."

On the plus side, MacDonald said the drama in Parliament went a long way to making Canadians more interested in the political system.

Overall, the premier said he thinks 2008 was a good year for Nova Scotia. He points to two highlights: The first is negotiating a crown share payment from the federal government that will bring hundreds of millions of dollars to Nova Scotia's coffers.

"Secondly is the pharmacare program for people who didn't have a drug plan," said MacDonald.

"That's one of the most significant social programs I believe we have seen in the province for a very long time, because it impacts those who most need it."

On the flip side, his biggest regret is not managing to pass essential services legislation that would ban health-care workers from going on strike.

MacDonald said the economic downturn will make 2009 difficult, but Nova Scotia will come out stronger in the end.

"In 12 months time, I think they're going to look at us and say, 'There's an example for the rest of Canada.'"

## What's open over the holidays

A rundown of the stores and services available

• Looking for food, wine or coffee? Here's what's open and closed over the holidays:

• **Wednesday, Dec. 24**  
Malls, most grocery stores and NSLC outlets open till 5 p.m. Tim Hortons hours vary; for example, the Young Street outlet in Halifax closes at 3 p.m. Check with your local coffee shop. Access Nova Scotia offices in the Halifax area close at noon.

• **Thursday Dec. 25**  
Everything's closed.

• **Friday, Dec. 26**  
Malls, NSLC outlets, grocery stores closed; Tim Hortons re-opens.

• **Saturday, Dec. 27**  
NSLC outlets and grocery stores open; malls open for Boxing Day shopping.

• **Monday, Dec. 29**

Access Nova Scotia offices open regular hours.

• **Wednesday, Dec. 31**  
Grocery stores close at 6 p.m. (check your favourite store); malls and NSLC outlets close at 5 p.m. Access Nova Scotia offices close at 4:30 p.m.

• **Thursday, Jan. 1**  
Happy New Year! Grocery stores, liquor stores and government offices closed.

# Christmas Specials

**Live Commercial Grade Lobsters**

**4.99lb**

(1-1.5lb Avg)  
(2 Claw)

**Live #1 Quality Marketsize Lobsters**

**5.99lb**

(1-4lb Avg)  
(2 Claw)

**Live Jumbo Lobsters**

**4.49lb**

(6lb +)  
(2 Claw)

**Frozen Cooked Lobster Meat**

**Claw & Knuckle**  
14.99 / 11.3 oz tin

**Broken Meat**  
13.99 / 11.3 oz tin

*There is no finer tradition on Christmas Eve than a Lobster Feast!*

*We are also open Boxing Day from 9am-5pm!*

**All specials while quantities last!**

<b>Fresh Hardshell Clams</b> <b>1.99lb</b> <small>(Topnecks) (Quahaugs)</small>	<b>Fresh Jumbo Digby Scallops</b> <b>9.99lb</b> <small>(10/20 Ct)</small>	<b>Fresh Haddock Fillets (Never Frozen)</b> <small>u/6oz</small> <b>3.99lb</b>   <small>7/12oz</small> <b>4.99lb</b>
<b>Jumbo Shrimp Raw</b> <b>5.99lb</b> <small>(Frozen) (21/25 Ct)</small>	<b>Jonah</b> <b>1.49lb</b>	<b>Snow</b> <b>3.99lb</b>
<b>Live Crab Specials</b> <b>Jumbo Dungeness</b> <b>8.99lb</b> <small>(2-3lb Avg)</small>		

**ALL-SPECIALS-WHILE-QUANTITIES-LAST!**

*Fisherman's Market:*  
*Bringing you Quality, Service, Variety and Value since 1948.*

**Fisherman's Market 607 Bedford Hwy. 443-3474**  
**HOLIDAY HOURS:** Boxing Day 9am - 5pm, Sat. 9am-6pm, Sun. 11am-6pm,  
 Mon.-Tuesday: 9-8, New Years Eve: 9-5, New Years Day: Closed  
**Gift Certificates & Party Trays Available**



# Board backs developer

UARB decides in favour of builder's bid for 12-storey towers

PAUL MCLEOD  
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**A developer has won two appeals against HRM and now has the right to build two 12-storey towers in Armdale.**

The municipality originally blocked the United Gulf Developments Ltd. project at 60 Walter Havill Dr. in April 2007. The developer also had to appeal to the Chebucto Community Council, which refused to amend a development agreement to permit the towers.

Much of the debate focused on whether both towers could be 12-stories tall. Under the original agreement, one tower was limited to four stories. The developer asked community council to revisit the agreement, but this was rejected without a public hearing.

The case ended up being brought to the Utility and Review Board. Yesterday the board released its



United Gulf Developments Ltd. has won two appeals against HRM in its bid to have two 12-storey towers built at 60 Walter Havill Dr.

ruling that the community council's refusal to amend the agreement failed to reasonably carry

out the region's planning strategy.

The UARB also ruled HRM development officer

Andrew Faulkner's rejection of the project conflicts with the development agreement.

# Court rejects Weagle's appeal

RACHEL BOOMER  
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**JUDGEMENT** When the police have identified you clearly from a picture and asked you to stop your car, it might be hard to argue you weren't the one driving it.

Yesterday, Nova Scotia's court of appeal shut down an appeal from Jason Weagle, a Halifax man convicted of nearly hitting a police officer as he tried to flee from officers who wanted to arrest him as part of a drug investigation.

On Jan. 12, 2007, two police officers pulled over Weagle's blue Honda Accord as it stopped at a red light on Bell Road. The police showed their badges, looked at the driver and a picture they had of the guy they were looking for, and identified the driver as Weagle.

The driver then pulled away, nearly hitting one of the officers and starting a 100 kilometre-per-hour chase to Dartmouth. Weagle was arrested the next day in Fairview.

He was handed a 10-month sentence for failing to stop while being pursued by police, dangerous driving, using a motor ve-

**"Given the evidence of the two officers who had the photograph of Mr. Weagle, the opportunities they had to observe him ... it cannot in my view be said that the verdict is unreasonable."**

Elizabeth Roscoe

hicle as a weapon and assaulting a police officer.

In a Dec. 4 appeal, Weagle argued he was actually visiting a friend at the time of the first car chase. Because another man was driving the same car during a second car chase at 1:10 a.m., Jan. 13, his lawyer argued, his alibi should have been enough for acquittal.

But appeal court Justice Elizabeth Roscoe didn't buy it.

"Given the evidence of the two officers who had the photograph of Mr. Weagle, the opportunities they had to observe him ... it cannot in my view be said that the verdict is unreasonable," Roscoe wrote.

Her decision was released yesterday.

## News in brief

**THEFTS** A Pictou County forestry contractor is out \$2,000 in fuel after a series of recent thefts. DeYoung and Sons has been victimized four times recently, including two heists this past weekend, at their jobsite in Cameron Settlement, Guysborough Co. Patricia DeYoung says the thefts have occurred two weekends

in a row, each time immediately after a holding tank at the jobsite was refueled.

"I could almost understand it if they were stealing this to fill their oil tanks and keep their family warm — once," DeYoung said. "But that's not happening here. They're selling this stuff."

**METRO HALIFAX**

**The Members of Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency wish you and your family a fire safe Christmas.**

**Candles are a leading cause of fire. When the power goes out don't be without. Use battery operated lights instead of candles.**

**HALIFAX REGIONAL FIRE & EMERGENCY**  
www.halifax.ca/fire

## Taxes force gas station to close

**PETRO** After six years of operating the Petro-Canada in West Amherst, Roy Pettigrew made the difficult decision to close its doors. As of Dec. 20, patrons visiting the station found the pumps dry.

Pettigrew says there's one main reason behind the closing. "The tax difference between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick ate me up," he said. "The government has got to realize that Cumberland County is in competition with New Brunswick, not Halifax," he said.

**METRO HALIFAX**

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**Ontario negotiating to share water supply**

Critics have warned the Ontario government that negotiating with Detroit to share Ontario's water supply sets a dangerous standard. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

5

# Canada



TARA WALTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sister Margaret O'Keefe poses in front of the mirror where she first saw herself in the habit 63 years ago. Sister Margaret, now 83, became a nun at the age of 20. She and buddhist teacher Michael Gayner shared their thoughts on inner peace.

## Finding inner peace

**For Michael Gayner, the vehicle is meditation. For Sister Margaret O'Keefe, it is prayer. For both, finding meaningful peace is tied to the practical action of helping to bring peace in to the world.**

Gayner, 47, is a teacher at the thriving downtown Toronto Buddhist community centre.

It's there that Sister Margaret O'Keefe, an 83-year-old Catholic nun and retired schoolteacher, recently spent three days in silent retreat with the other nuns.

There is a common thread running through conversations with these two spiritual teachers — that inner peace naturally flows into helping others find peace, too.

**Michael Gayner**

**Q:** How do you find peace in the city?

**A:** I don't seek peace through meditation, nor do I find it there. To find real peace for all people, you would have to over-



Michael Gayner

look a lot of injustice in the world. That's not what it's about for me.

**Q:** So, you see the density of the city as an opportunity?

**A:** If you become dependent on the mountains or the country for sanity, that's problematic. There's a weakness in being who you want to be.

**Q:** Do the Buddhist teachings apply in your everyday life of getting around the city, answering e-mail, meeting people?

**A:** The saying is: "Don't wait in ambush." It arises as a teaching to deal with

your plotting. Like, when you're walking down the street but you're thinking: "I'm going to get him!" or "Here's what I'm going to say to him!" I find myself doing that sometimes and the saying comes to mind.

**Margaret O'Keefe**

**Q:** How do you find peace in the city?

**A:** It's not the place, but the practices that sanctify.

**Q:** How do you define peace?

**A:** I think peace is the fruit of your decision to be faithful to your call. It's not outside of you. You can't find peace in things. It has to come from inside.

**Q:** Is this a very peaceful place during your annual Christmas retreat?

**A:** This year, we had a talk about hope, which really affected me. I was applying it to myself and it helped me a lot. And, you know, peace is a lot like hope. You make a choice to be peaceful, just like you make a choice to be hopeful.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

## Long recovery for storm survivor

**RESCUE** A Toronto-area woman managed to survive for three days buried deep in a snowbank, most likely because the snow helped to insulate her, police said Tuesday.

Donna Molnar, 55, was last seen on Friday when she left her home west of Toronto in a snowstorm to get baking supplies. Her van was found abandoned by the side of a windswept rural road late the next day.



Donna Molnar

Rescuers approaching the spot found Molnar, who was suffering from hypothermia. She is now in hospital in serious but stable condition.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Molnar was put on painkillers while doctors assessed her injuries. They indicated her recovery would be long as her body temperature had dropped to about 30 C and was hypothermic.

REUTERS

## News in brief

**KIDS** A panel on infertility has recently posted an online survey asking for people to share their experiences at Ontario.ca/creatingfamilies. The panel is expected to report back to the minister of children on the need for publicly funded in-vitro fertilization treatments for Ontarians. One treatment is roughly \$10,000. Quebec Premier Jean Charest promised shortly before he was re-elected last month to publicly fund two in-vitro fertilization treatments for women unable to conceive.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

# BOXING DAYS

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Beat the winter blues!

**\$250.00 off** the purchase of any DreamMaker or FreeFlow plug n'play spa in stock.

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## Pension relief

U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday signed into law a measure intended to help company pension plans and retirees that have been hard hit by the financial crisis. **REUTERS**

# World



## Police bus shot at in Greece

Hundreds of anarchists chanting "cops, pigs, murderers" marched through Athens yesterday, hours after a gunman opened fire at a riot-police bus in a third week of anti-government protests since police shot dead a teenager.

An unidentified gunman shot at the bus carrying 19 officers when it stopped at traffic lights outside a university campus in eastern Athens at around 5 a.m.

Two bullets hit the bus, bursting a tire, but no one was injured in the incident, which is being inves-

**"It's worrying us. We collected seven bullet cases from the spot."**

Police spokesman Panagiotis Stathis

tigated by counterterrorism police.

It came after a two-day lull in Greece's worst riots in decades, sparked by the shooting of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

"It's worrying us," police spokesman Panagiotis Stathis told Mega TV. "We collected seven bullet cases from the spot."

A police official, who

asked not to be identified, said the shots were believed to have come from the campus and were fired from a military weapon. Authorities are investigating a call from a previously unknown group called Public Action to a popular Greek news website claiming responsibility.

Police are forbidden by law from entering the uni-

versity without permission. It has become the epicentre of disturbances, which have caused hundreds of millions of euros in damage and lost business for shopkeepers in the capital.

Some 500 anarchist students, including dozens who are occupying the Athens law school, marched through central Athens waving red and black flags. They burnt an effigy of a pig's head wearing a police hat outside parliament.

**REUTERS**

## Newsmaker of the Year



## Obama seen as president of change

**RISE TO POWER** Barack Obama, who dominated headlines during his ascension to the U.S. presidency, is the Newsmaker of the Year, as chosen by Metro Canada editors.

His speech at Chicago's Grant Park on Nov. 4 was watched around the globe and had the excitement of a major sporting event.

Obama, who will be sworn in as the 44th U.S. president on Jan. 20, will be the first African-American to lead the world's most influential nation. His rise to power, 45 years after the height of the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, inspired millions who saw him as someone whose hard work allowed him to break race barriers and succeed.

Adding to the exhilaration surrounding Obama the man is the sense of change he represents as compared to outgoing President George W. Bush.

Obama is seen as the anti-Bush, a leader who can restore the United States' image and improve the economy.

METRO CANADA

## Syria Marching Santas



Students dressed as Santa Claus take part in a march yesterday, organized by Christian churches, to celebrate Christmas in Damascus, Syria.

## Olmert orders barrier finished by 2010

**MIDDLE EAST** Israel must complete its Jerusalem barrier by 2010, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday, signalling plans to press ahead with a project that Palestinians condemn as a major obstacle to any peace accord.

Of the 790-kilometre-

long network of fences and walls Israel is building in and along the occupied West Bank, a fifth runs around Jerusalem, including key eastern parts of the holy city where Palestinians want a capital for future statehood.

**REUTERS**

## China sends pandas to wary Taiwan

**ASIA** A pair of giant pandas from China's fog-shrouded mountains reached an excited but wary Taiwan yesterday, a symbol of improved relations between the longtime political rivals who once stood at the brink of war.

Panda-decorated baggage trucks drove out to collect the crates carrying Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan from the cargo hold of a jumbo jet that landed at north Taiwan's major airport.

After arriving at the Taipei city zoo in a truck with police escorts, the pandas, whose names said together mean "unite," were taken to a \$9.24-million US hillside complex where they should attract huge crowds after a month in quarantine.

Giving away pandas is seen as China's most popular use of soft power toward Taiwan since 2005, when it began making offers instead of military threats to impress the self-ruled island that Beijing considers its own.

**REUTERS**

## News in brief

**SINGAPORE** More than 100 passengers stranded for six hours on the world's largest ferris wheel were being evacuated and given medical treatment in Singapore after the attraction ground to a halt yesterday. The Singapore Flyer stopped working after a short circuit in one of its motor drivers cut its power.

**REUTERS**



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# Comment & Views

## Comment

# Getting over the holiday hump

### LifeCycle

**Denise Rudnicki**

drudnicki@gmail.com

If you're celebrating Christmas with your family, then this column is not for you. If you are experiencing your first Christmas following the breakup of your marriage, then read on.

That first Christmas is marked by self-pity, regret, sorrow and fear. That's

normal. That's even if you wanted the marriage to end.

I remember my own "first Christmas" five years ago in the new apartment, overwhelmed and incapable of making a Christmas for my two teenagers; succumbing to mother's guilt and putting up a small tree; feeling sick as I hung the decorations we'd collected as a family for 20 years; finding the surfing Santa Claus we'd bought on our honeymoon; putting out three Christmas stockings and leaving the fourth one in the box.

I remember their Dad's expensive gifts; my mea-

gre ones; my dumb decision to make pasta for dinner instead of turkey; feeling confused about what family traditions I should try to keep going for the kids; not caring about family traditions anymore; trying not to cry in front of them but sometimes failing; worrying about them; knowing they worried about me. What fun.



It's hard to believe when you are in that black hole of despair; when your home is gone and your kids aren't with you; when you would rather hide under the kitchen table than face Christmas on your own, that it could ever be anything but horrible. But like everything else, there's a right way and a wrong

way to get over the hump. You can either make an opportunity out of the fact that your life has changed or wallow. So make the right choice.

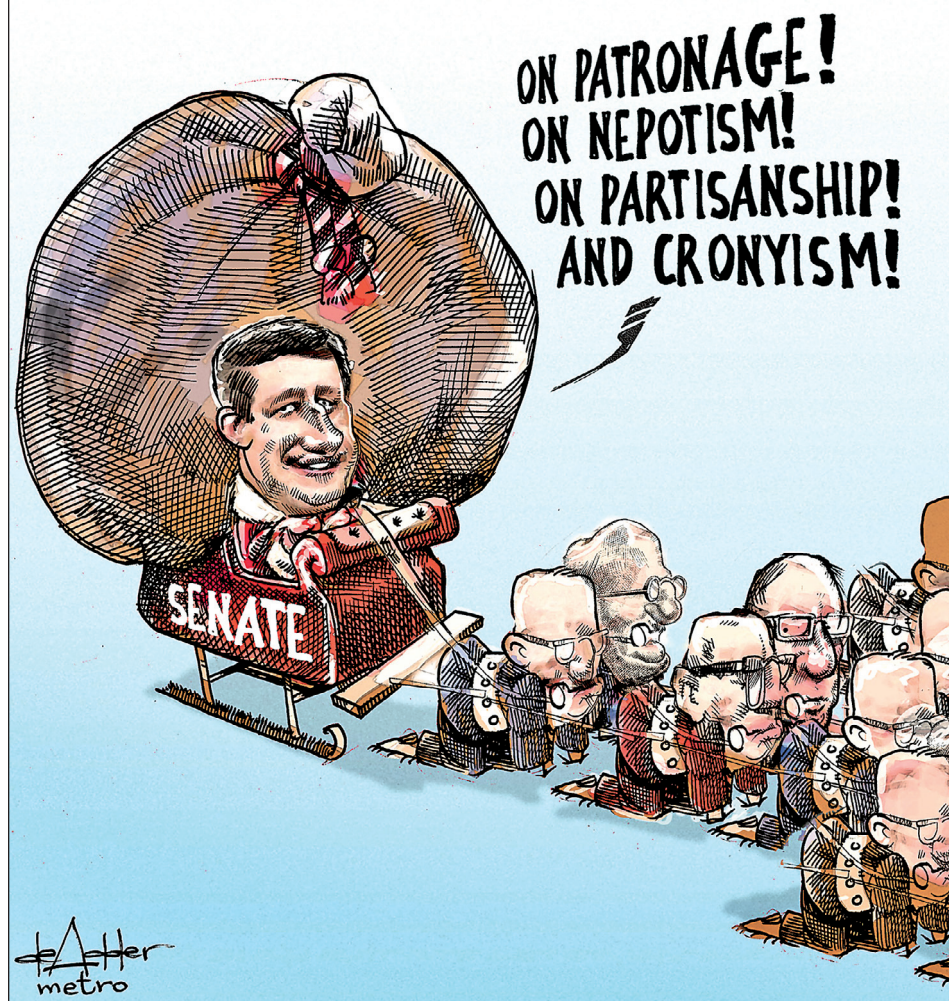
Get rid of your anger. Stop fighting with your ex. Become independent. Show your kids you can cope with anything. Become an example to them. Your kids would rather see Mom going for job interviews, determined to make a new life, than sobbing in her eggnog as she reads the forwarded Christmas card from her ex-mother-in-law. Keep a sense of humour, even if it's pretty black at first. Be-

lieve me, it does get better. You will reinvent yourself and you will be happy again.

Christmas is a wonderful time and you will figure out a combination of new and old ways of enjoying it and making it meaningful. So don't be too hard on yourself if you aren't perfect this first Christmas. Focus on the future, not the past. Love your kids. Love yourself. Do these things and it will be a merrier Christmas next year.

Denise Rudnicki is a West Coast-based writer, communications executive, and journalism instructor at Royal Roads University.

## EIGHTEEN TORY SENATORS:



## Word on the street: Do you find the holiday season stressful or relaxing?

**Roger King**

age 29, Halifax

A: In retail, it's stressful ... but I get four days off. It's like a good book, it builds up to a climax.



**Kirsty MacRae**

age 24, Ottawa

A: I find it relaxing. I did all my shopping online, so I don't have to go to the mall. And I got shipping deals, too.



**PJ Noel**

age 36, Halifax

A: I just had a little baby, so it makes it worth it.



**Tracy Leblanc**

Edmonton

A: I do find it stressful because I live in Ottawa and my family lives (here in Edmonton) — my luggage got lost and my flight came in at four in the morning.



**Maryanne Smith**

age 26, Calgary

A: I find it very stressful, actually, because I work in retail. So it's been pretty hectic for me.



**Shawn Jordan**

age 33, Toronto

A: Relaxing, because I get to spend it with my girlfriend.



**Leisha MacDonald**

age 24, Ottawa

A: I don't find it stressful at all. This year, I'm trying to be more artistic ... I'm painting everyone's present.



**David Blass**

age 22, Calgary

A: I think the holidays are a very stressful time of year because it's always so busy everywhere.



It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: [halifaxletters@metronews.ca](mailto:halifaxletters@metronews.ca)

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.



The incoming Obama administration is nearing an agreement with congressional Democrats on a huge emergency spending bill intended to jolt the U.S. economy and create three million jobs over two years, vice-president-elect Joe Biden said. **REUTERS**

# Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

## Business in brief

**APPOINTMENT** Barrick Gold has hired accountant and former mining executive Aaron Regent as its new chief executive, replacing Greg Wilkins. Regent was previously co-chief executive of Brookfield Asset Management.

**STOCKS** Shareholders of U.S. oil drilling firm Grey Wolf voted yesterday to approve a cash and stock takeover by Canada's Precision Drilling Trust. The company offered \$9.02 cash or 0.4225 of a Precision trust unit for each Grey Wolf share.

**FORESTRY** Papermaker Abitibi-Bowater expects an improvement in its fourth quarter and 2009 results, it said. It added it has a preliminary deal to sell its 75 per cent stake in hydro-electric asset owner ACH Limited Partnership for 540 million.

**TECHNOLOGY** Toshiba Corp. plans to spend up to \$330 million US to build a lithium ion battery factory in Niigata prefecture, northwest of Tokyo, boosting production capacity about 70-fold. Production is to begin in late 2010. **REUTERS**

## Grocers the big winners in recession

**In times of economic turmoil, it's good to be in the grocery business for more than the obvious reasons.**

People still need to eat. While they can put off buying a bigger TV or the latest winter boot, they're still going to be in the grocery store. Every week.

Another well-known benefit of bad times is that consumers tend to cut out restaurant meals and do more home entertaining, one more plus for the local food retailer.

But a less obvious fact is that even as the most value-conscious customers "trade down" to cheaper store brands, it can help boost the retailer's bottom line as store brands are more profitable for them.

And the move to private-label products also gives the retailers more bargaining power with name-brand suppliers, who become more eager to jointly fund special promotions to regain lost market share.

"The only one who loses is the consumer packaged-goods company," says Martin Weintraub, managing director of Karabus Management, a retail consulting firm based in Toronto.

So while other businesses may tear their hair at the thought of trying to survive what could be a long and deep recession, the chief financial officer of a major U.S. grocery chain recently told Weintraub: "I'm finally happy to be working in the grocery industry."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

## metro life panel

### Top 2008 events

- 1. Financial sector meltdown
- 2. Gasoline prices hitting an all time high as oil costs a record \$147.27 US a barrel
- 3. TSX drops more than 800 points
- 4. Auto sector meltdown
- 5. Hudson's Bay Co. is purchased by American investor
- 6. Housing crisis
- 7. Canada posts its worst November job losses in 25 years
- 8. Conrad Black begins jail term
- 9. Zoom Airlines files for bankruptcy protection
- 10. Manufacturing sector meltdown



Black

AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

## Any deficit will be temporary: feds

**ECONOMY** The Canadian government will ensure that any deficit spending it unveils in the Jan. 27 budget will be temporary, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said last week that the government could run a deficit of up to \$30 billion next year as it tries to stimulate the economy and fight off the global financial crisis.

Flaherty also said he would lay out in the budget how he plans to return to a budget surplus.

REUTERS



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**Career night for Rautins**

Canadian national basketball team member Andy Rautins equalled a Syracuse University record with nine three-pointers in an 82-71 Orange victory over Coppin State on Monday night. Rautins, the son of men's national coach and Raptors broadcaster Leo Rautins, also scored a career-high 29 points in the game. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

9

# Sports

SPORTS@METRONews.CA



## Teixeira to ... where else? Yankees

The New York Yankees, generally perceived to be on the fringes of the Mark Teixeira sweepstakes, dramatically swooped in yesterday to strike a deal for the biggest prize among position players on the free-agent market. The Yankees, who recently signed the top two starting pitchers on the market — left-hander CC Sabathia and right-hander AJ Burnett — gave the all-star first baseman an eight-year, \$180-million US deal. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

# Canada's drive for five is ready to begin

**MATTHEW WUEST**  
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca



**The IIHF world junior championship begins on Boxing Day at Scotiabank Place in Ottawa. Canada, which opens against the Czech Republic at 9:30 p.m. AT, is looking to match its own record of five straight gold medals.**

Team Canada's chief scout, Al Murray, sat down to offer a breakdown of the assembled roster.

**FORWARDS**

John Tavares of Oakville, Ont., will be Canada's go-to goal-scorer and a productive tournament will help his bid to go No. 1 overall in June's NHL draft.

The scoring line of Cody Hodgson, Zach Boychuk and Jordan Eberle has shown flashes of dominance in exhibition action. Hodgson is a Vancouver Canucks first-



Pat Quinn and company open up against the Czech Republic on Boxing Day.

round pick and Eberle is an Edmonton Oilers first-round selection.

Western Leaguers Brett Sonne and Jamie Benn are lesser-known forwards who know how to generate offense.

But the Canadian staff

built the team on the principle that no line will sit on the bench when a goal is needed.

"It's a balanced group, top to bottom, through all four lines," Murray said. "It wouldn't surprise me on any given day that any of

the lines could be our top-scoring unit."

**DEFENCE**

The top pairing features Los Angeles Kings first-rounders Colten Teubert and returnee Thomas Hickey. Hickey, a two-way force,

will also serve as captain.

Alex Pietrangelo, drafted fourth overall by the St. Louis Blues this past June, and Ryan Ellis, a gifted 17-year-old, will log a pile of minutes in power-play situations. Returnee P.K. Subban, a Montreal Canadiens draft pick, and 6-foot-7 Tyler Meyers will also be factors. Subban has been used as a forward when necessary. "We have some strong defensive players on the back end who can do the job when called upon," Murray said.

**GOAL**

The starting issue may not be solved until after the round robin because the staff thinks highly of both Chet Pickard and Dustin Tokarski to rotate them.

"It's a wide-open battle," said Murray. "Both are on top of their games, both have proven track records, and both have battled against each other in the

### Canada's sked

- Dec. 26 vs. Czech Republic
- Dec. 28 vs. Kazakhstan
- Dec. 29 vs. Germany
- Dec. 31 vs. USA

WHL."

**OUTLOOK**

With only five returnees from last year and Tavares as the only true star, this is a team of no-names for the majority of Canadian hockey fans. There will also be plenty of pressure for the teenagers, with the tournament on home ice and the intense media spotlight surrounding the drive for five.

But Murray said pressure is something of a myth.

"There's not pressure to win so many in a row, there's pressure to win — period," Murray said. "We come in expecting to win gold and that's an opportunity, not a daunting task."

## One expensive snowball

New York Jets defensive end Shaun Ellis was fined \$10,000 US by the NFL for throwing snow at fans as he left the field following this past Sunday's game at Seattle.

Ellis, as he was heading toward the locker room after the 13-3 loss, picked up a large chunk of snow and hurled it toward the seats in response to fans throwing snowballs at the team.

"He has been disciplined by the league," Jets head coach Eric Mangini said yesterday.

Mangini added that

many Jets personnel were hit by snowballs from the fans.

"That situation in the stadium, in general, was not a very safe situation for anybody involved," Mangini said.

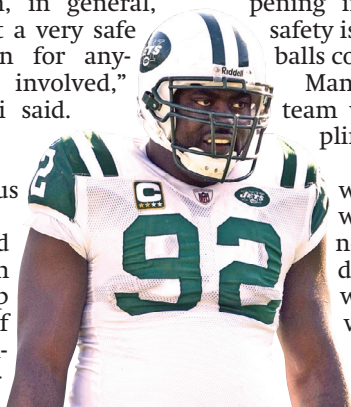
"That doesn't justify us getting involved in it on the flip side of that. (Ellis) un-

derstands that. We thought that there could've been more done to prevent what was happening in terms of the safety issues from snowballs coming down."

Mangini said the team would not discipline Ellis.

Ellis, meanwhile, said there was no maliciousness to the incident and that he was having fun with the fans.

**METRO NEWS SERVICES**



### Juniors Final tuneup



Team Canada forward Jordan Eberle looks to score against Slovakia in world junior hockey exhibition play in Hamilton, Ont., last night. Canada won 7-0.

MIKE CASSESE/REUTERS

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# Herd send MacMillan to Rimouski

PAUL MCLEOD  
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

**The Mooseheads pulled the trigger on a big holiday trade yesterday, sending forward Logan MacMillan to the Rimouski Oceanic for 17-year-old forward Guillaume Pelletier.**

The Mooseheads will also receive several draft picks from Rimouski — a fourth-round pick in the 2009 QMJHL Entry Draft, second-round picks in 2010 and 2011, plus a third rounder in 2011.

Rimouski is hosting the Memorial Cup this year and therefore receives an

automatic bid to the tournament.

Similar to past major Christmas trades, a player to be named will likely come to the Mooseheads at next summer's draft.

MacMillan, 19, had played 251 games with the Mooseheads since 2005 and amassed 124 points, 48 goals and 76 assists, to go with 217 penalty minutes.

"It's mixed emotions, I guess. I'm obviously excited to go to Rimouski where there's a lot of rich history," said MacMillan.

"At the same time, leaving Halifax, they've been very good to me over the years."

Pelletier, 6-foot-2 and 210



Logan MacMillan amassed 124 points in 251 career games with Halifax.

pounds, was a third-round pick (46th overall) by the Oceanic in the 2007 entry draft. He's played in 33

games this season, scoring three goals with three assists. He was captain of Team Quebec in the 2008 world under-17 hockey challenge.

"Logan had a no-trade clause. But we were able to make something happen for the benefit of his future as a hockey player," said Mooseheads general manager Marcel Patenaude.

"And it brings us a player in Pelletier that we think has got a lot of potential. And it gives us a lot of draft picks."

Patenaude said Mooseheads scouts had been watching Pelletier and ranked him very highly.

Patenaude said he want-

ed to get the deal done before the new year. He could have waited until early January to hold out for a better offer, but didn't want to risk things falling apart at the last minute, he said.

The Mooseheads made another move by adding free-agent defenceman George Dunn to their roster.

Dunn, 18, 6-foot-3 and 190 pounds, was playing with Fort Erie in the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League. He had one goal and six assists in 19 games.

Dunn impressed the Mooseheads when he practised with them at the beginning of December.

## It's the time of year for giving and forgiving

spend (waste?) lots of time ripping prima-donna megazillionaires in professional sports, hot shots who somehow think their perspiration smells nicer than ours. I guess I'm a jaded sports-writer.

Today, however, I'm actually feeling somewhat sorry for some of these same dudes. I guess it's the time of year.

Like, honestly, I'm finding myself hoping Michael Vick and Sean Avery and Plaxico Burress — perpetrators of loathsome acts — get second chances in the new year and rebound from adversity.

### YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

I'm hoping Todd Bertuzzi reaches a mind-easing settlement to an issue that was created by his despicable violence but that has dragged on too long.

I'm hoping Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds somehow prove they didn't load up with performance-enhancing drugs and receive the bouquets we long

figured were coming to them for their domination in baseball.

I hope MLB revisits its stance on Pete Rose and welcomes the hits leader into the Hall of Fame before it's too late for him to treasure it the way he should.

I hope Casey Printers is allowed to stay with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and show he deserves the CFL-high salary this woebegone franchise inexplicably gave him.

Heck, I'm in such a mood today that I actually hope Don Cherry continues to regurgitate his bafflegab on CBC and keeps on dressing like a clown.

I hope Manny Ramirez signs for the unfathomable dollars he craves and is allowed by his new manager to let his hair grow down to below the butt inside his baggy pants.

I hope Craig MacTavish survives as head coach of the Edmonton Oilers, though I seriously doubt that will happen with a struggling squad proving it has nowhere near the type of talent we reckoned it would this season.

I hope the Detroit Lions can somehow muster up enough to finally record a victory this weekend and avoid becoming the first 0-16 team in NFL history, though I seriously doubt that will happen because they are so very, very awful.

I hope Jay Triano — the first Canadian head coach in NBA history and a decent chap by all accounts — can

### NHL Report

• Be sure to check out Marty York's latest NHL Report this afternoon, exclusively at [metronews.ca/nhlreport](http://metronews.ca/nhlreport)

revive the Raptors, though I seriously doubt that will happen since overrated club czar Bryan Colangelo has provided him with a dog of a team (that has only two bona fide players — Chris Bosh and Jose Calderon).

I hope Maple Leafs bossman Brian Burke smiles. Just once.

I hope the Blue Jays can talk MLB into moving them to a different division.

And I hope you enjoy the holidays.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

### NHL Leafs pummelled



Toronto's Andre Deveau, right, pulls the jersey over the head of Dallas's Krystofer Barch last night. Dallas won 8-2.

## metro life panel

### Top 10 Canadian sports stories of 2008

- Canadians win three gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Beijing — wrestler Carol Huynh, equestrian Eric Lamaze and the men's eight rowing team.
- Not often does a song rank as a top story, but the memorable Hockey Night in Canada theme song is played on CBC for the last time in June and moves over to TSN.
- The first regular-season NFL game was played in Canada and was something of a Jay Triano flop.



- Sam Mitchell was fired as head coach of the Toronto Raptors and was replaced by assistant coach Jay Triano, who became the first Canadian head coach in NBA history.
- The Dallas Stars cut Sean Avery in December after he made lewd remarks.
- Adam van Koeverden was heavily favoured to win gold in the 1,000- and 500-metre races in men's kayaking in Beijing, but finished eighth and second, respectively.
- Led by first-year CFL coach John Hufnagel and quarterback Henry Burris, the Calgary Stampeders upset the Alouettes in November to win the Grey Cup in Montreal.
- It was an extraordinarily tough year as a bevy of CFL luminaries died, including Joe Krol, Ron Lancaster, Jake Gaudaur, Bob Ackles, Leif Pettersen, J.I. Albrecht, Ralph Sazio and Earl Lunsford.
- After months of speculation, the Toronto Maple Leafs hired ex-Vancouver Canucks GM Brian Burke as their new chief.
- The Toronto Blue Jays finished out of the playoffs again, brought back manager Cito Gaston in mid-season and said goodbye to club president Paul Godfrey. METRO NEWS SERVICES

### Sports in brief

**MLB** The New York Yankees announced yesterday that bleacher seats for the games against the Chicago Cubs on April 3 and 4 will sell for 25 cents US and grandstand tickets will cost \$1.10. That matches the prices for the opener of the original Yankee Stadium against Boston on April 18, 1923.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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# Automotive

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EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA



## Passat CC a head-turner

LORNE DRURY  
for Metro Canada

**When I first saw the Volkswagen Passat CC at the Detroit auto show last January, I was impressed by its styling.**

Finally, here was a Volkswagen with real pizzazz, one that stands out and makes a statement.

Not that all the other Volkswagen offerings are bland, but none are as stylish as the Passat CC — a sedan with a sweeping roof line that gives it a coupe-like look, similar to the Mercedes CLS. It's so striking it just may be the best-looking Volkswagen ever produced.

And when I had a chance to drive it for the first time at the recent Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) Car of the Year Test-fest in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I came away even more impressed.

So were the other judges. The Passat CC (the CC stands for Comfort Coupe, I'm told) was judged best new family car over \$30,000 for 2009.

It's available with two engine choices— a 2.0-litre four-cylinder in line turbocharged engine, producing 200 horsepower and 207 lb/ft of torque and a 3.6-litre 280-horsepower V6 with 265 lb/ft of torque.

While the Passat CC is a head-turner because of its superb exterior styling, the interior is nothing to sneeze at either.

Whether in Sportline or Highline trim, the cabin is nicely done. The stylish dash is well thought out with all knobs, gauges and buttons easy to reach. Some observers think the dash material with its "pebbly" appearance takes away somewhat from the elegance of the de-

### 2009 VW Passat CC

**Type:** Four-door sedan  
**Price:** \$31,975 to \$44,975  
**Engine:** 2.0-litre four cylinder, inline turbocharged with intercooler and direct injection  
**HP:** 200-280

#### Highlights

- AWD
- Attractive styling
- Award-winning

sign, but I really don't have a problem with it.

The use of polished aluminum and wood grain trim as interior accents adds to the appeal of the cabin and the Nappa leather seats in my test vehicle were top grade.

The sport-style driver's seat is heavily bolstered and I never really got it adjusted for a perfect fit. I suspect that was my doing rather than a design factor. Rear seat headroom was adequate and actually better than expected with the sloping coupe-style roof line, which is about 50 mm (two inches) lower than in the Passat sedan.

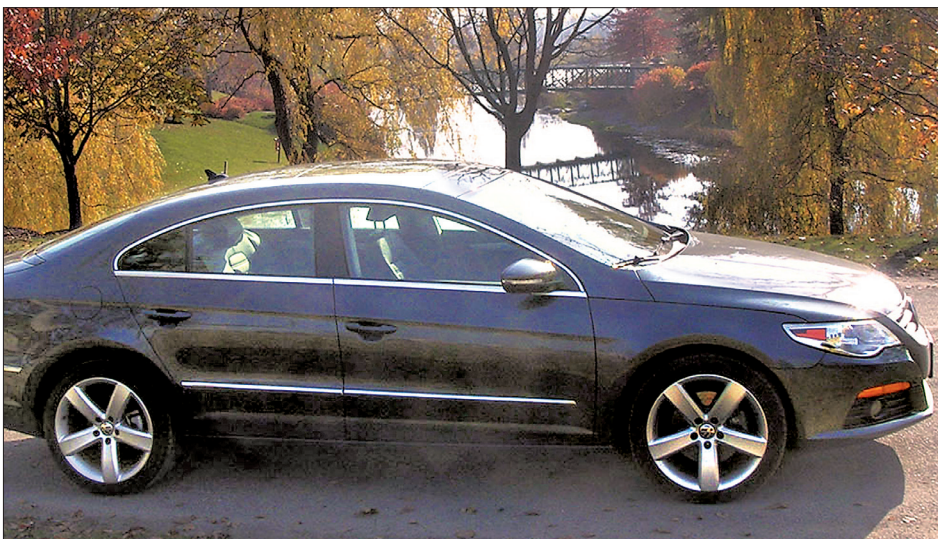
Legroom is also fine for rear-seat passengers, but this is truly a 2 + 2 design with buckets front and rear.

In AJAC testing, the CC produced acceleration numbers of 7.9 seconds (0-100 km/h) and 5.9 seconds (80-120 km/h) and a braking number of 43.1m (100-0 km/h).

Fuel consumption ratings for the 2.0T are 10.8L/100 km (26 mpg) city and 7.1L/100 km (40 mpg) highway, with an average of 9.1L/100 km (31 mpg).



How are potential car buyers reacting to the economy? Find out at [metronews.ca/auto](http://metronews.ca/auto)



The 2009 Volkswagen Passat CC has a coupe-like look, for a four-passenger sport sedan. The Passat CC was the winner in the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) best new family car over \$30,000. It is now in the running for 2009 Canadian car of the year.



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\*MSRP of \$31,975 for a new 2009 Passat CC Sportline with manual transmission. Freight and PDI of \$1,335, PPSA, license, insurance, registration, options, applicable taxes and any dealer charges are extra. MSRP of Passat CC Highline V6 as shown is \$44,975. Supplies limited. Dealer may sell for less. Visit [vw.ca](http://vw.ca) or your Volkswagen dealer for details. "Passat", "Volkswagen" and the Volkswagen logo are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG; "Passat CC" and "CC" are trademarks of Volkswagen AG. © 2008 Volkswagen Canada.

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U.S. aviation regulators are pressing airlines to voluntarily trim operations at New York's congested LaGuardia airport, after a plan to auction takeoff and landing rights at three of the city's airports was stayed by a court. LaGuardia is the most delay-prone airport in the U.S. **REUTERS**

# Travel

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# NYC's new holiday highlights

Skate at the Polar Rink, catch a Cirque show and take a tour of Brooklyn's Christmas lights

## TheTravelJunkie



Manhattan is a magical place over the holiday season.

Twinkling white lights decorate storefronts, while horse-drawn carriages trot through a snow dusted Central Park.

Even with a troubled economy, nothing beats Christmas in New York! With restaurants, bars, theatres and department stores packed with happy holiday-goers, you'd never know we're in a recession.

If you're planning a trip to the city, here are my top five things to do in NYC this holiday season:

### Practice your high kick:

The Christmas Spectacular, starring the legendary leggy Rockettes, is an an-

nual holiday tradition at Radio City Music Hall, the largest indoor theatre in the world. While the legendary show only runs until Dec. 30, aspiring Rockette dancers can kick up their heels all year long.

The Rockette Experience is a three-hour workshop taught by a real Radio City Rockette. Wannabes can learn choreography from the Rockette's repertoire, go through a mock audition, pose with a Rockette teacher, and take the Stage Door Tour.

The program gives regular people the opportunity to train with these world famous dancers in their actual rehearsal hall. Students must be at least 10 years old, with some training in jazz, tap, and ballet. For \$108, you get a Rockette dance class, a tour and a free t-shirt. [radiocity.com/rockettes](http://radiocity.com/rockettes)

### Take the plunge:

If cold water and the onset of hypothermia gets your blood pumping, check out the annual

Coney Island Polar Bear Club New Year's Day Swim. At 1 p.m. on Jan. 1, hundreds of swimmers take a dip in the icy waters of the Atlantic.

Part rite of passage, part frosty philanthropy, winter bathing has been a New York City tradition since 1903. Pack your swim suit, surf boots, some warm clothes and a sense of humor for a fun day of frostbite. [polarbearclub.org](http://polarbearclub.org)

### Cirque:

Catch Wintuk, a Cirque du Soleil holiday production at Madison Square Gardens, which runs until Jan. 4. Wintuk "tells the touching winter tale of a boy's quest for snow in an imaginary land."

In typical Cirque style, Wintuk includes acrobatics, creatively costumed dancers, puppets and high-energy music.

This family-oriented show boasts some 50 performers, from contortionist tight-rope walkers to jugglers, balancing their technical twists and twirls.

### Sharpen your skates:

While there are many iconic places in Manhattan to ice skate (including Rockefeller Center or Central Park) the Polar Rink is a sparkling new facility to cut your blades on. The American Museum of Natural History, which offers such exhibits as Sea Monsters, Climate Change and The Butterfly Conservatory, now boasts a new state-of-the-art skating rink.

Visitors can sip hot chocolate, take in the Upper Westside view and glide around a 17-foot-tall polar bear. Skate rental is included in the ticket price, which is \$10 for adults, \$8 for kids and \$9 for students and seniors. [amnh.org/museum/polar-rink](http://amnh.org/museum/polar-rink)

### Light up:

For an illuminated look at New York, hop aboard a guided tour of Brooklyn's most famous (and often gaudy) Christmas lights. This three-and-a-half-hour tour takes visitors through the Italian-American



Visitors can tour Brooklyn's large-scale Christmas light displays.

neighbourhood of Dyker Heights, a residential area said to have the most extravagant holiday yard decorations. A trip here promises mansions draped with lights and front yards

stacked with neon nativity scenes, animatronic toys, mechanical reindeer and 30-foot toy soldiers.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of [thetraveljunkie.ca](http://thetraveljunkie.ca).



**Valuable hanky**

Scarlett Johansson's used tissue has raised \$5,300 for charity. U.S. TV network NBC put the soiled tissue on auction website eBay after The Spirit star appeared on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno last week. [FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK](http://FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK)



# Entertainment



## You betcha

Tina Fey was voted The Associated Press' Entertainer of the Year, an annual honour chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country. [MSN.COM](http://MSN.COM)

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, [DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA](mailto:DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA)

## Spirit a campy, stylized Bond

### The Spirit

**Director:** Frank Miller

**Stars:** Gabriel Macht, Scarlett Johansson

**Classification:** 14A

**Rating:** ♂♂

**STEVE GOW**  
for Metro Canada



**Oddly enough, The Spirit reminds me of a cartoon version of James Bond. See, in the same sense that the British spy is an indestructible crime fighter driven largely off the insatiable appetite of women, so too is this comic book icon.**

Based on Will Eisner's legendary comic strip from the 1940s, a murdered cop (Gabriel Macht) mysteriously returns from death to become a hard-boiled masked crusader named The Spirit who vows to defend his city from crimi-

nals like the conspiring megalomaniac Octopus (Samuel L. Jackson).

Brought to life by Frank Miller (Sin City), the artist-turned-filmmaker gives the pulp fiction a slick, stylistic movie treatment that pays homage to the starkness of mid-20th century film noir. Indeed, by giving The Spirit the same effects-heavy look mastered in Sin City, this film is — if nothing else — stunning to watch. For some however, The Spirit's stark characters and extreme dialogue will be a campy turn off. After all, there's no subtlety in such lines as "shut up and bleed" and "I'm going to kill you all kinds of dead."

In the end, the problem with The Spirit is that to make a great film you need more than just a slick cinematographer and a few catchy quips.

## Bedtime Stories boring

### Bedtime Stories

**Director:** Adam Shankman

**Stars:** Adam Sandler, Keri Russell

**Classification:** G

**Rating:** ♂♂♂

**PHIL BROWN**  
for Metro Canada



**Bedtime Stories brings Adam Sandler to Disney and the results are predictably placid. Sandler's once anarchistic comic spirit has been dulling with age and joining the Disney team feels like an appropriate crash landing for his downward trajectory.**

The film is far too predictably childish to appeal to the actor's core audience, coming off like the type of forgettable family comedy that would have

starred Steve Guttenberg and gone straight to video 10 years ago.

Adam Sandler stars as Skeeter Bronson a bumbling man-child who spent his life working maintenance in a massive hotel. While babysitting his niece and nephew, Skeeter discovers that when he tells the children a fairy tale based on his life, the kids can make predictions about what will happen in his own future.

There are certainly a few funny sequences in Bedtime Stories, but for the most part the film relies on slapstick and silly voices. Sandler is as endearing a screen presence as ever, but his character lacks personality, so he rarely gets the opportunity to be funny outside of the fantasy sequences.



Adam Sandler

Guy Pierce, Lucy Lawless, and the always welcome Russell Brand score some big laughs in supporting roles, but the film that surrounds them is so lifeless that their work feels wasted. That said, Bedtimes Stories is so inoffensive and has enough funny moments that it is a difficult movie to despise, but it's not that easy to truly like either.

## metro life panel

### Top 2008 actors

- 1. Heath Ledger (The Dark Knight)
- 2. Meryl Streep (Doubt)
- 3. Angelina Jolie (Changeling)
- 4. Sean Penn (Milk)
- 5. Brad Pitt (The Curious Case of Benjamin Button)



Ledger

### Top 2008 movies

- 1. The Dark Knight
- 2. Wall-E
- 3. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
- 4. Slumdog Millionaire
- 5. Frost/Nixon

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

# Adopt a Family

## Holy Holly! Adopt a Family was a Smashing Success!

*On* Saturday, December 13 the spirit of Christmas was alive and well at the Purolator Depot in Burnside as many people came together to support families in need this holiday season.

Metro News would like to sincerely thank the citizens and the companies who supported our 50 adopted families. We were overwhelmed by their generosity.

We'd like to send out special thanks to the staff at Purolator Courier for donat-

ing their time and delivering the many gifts to these families. Their partnership with The Salvation Army and us on this project is a testament to their community Spirit.

We'd especially like to thank Adam Ken-nific from Purolator Courier, Diane van der Horden, Ron Zima and Coralee Malloy from The Salvation Army, and the management and staff at Tim Hortons on Ilsley Avenue. We also wish to express our appreciation to the many volunteers who came out with smiling faces to help

us welcome and thank the many sponsors who came bearing gifts.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all,

*The staff at Metro News, Halifax*



## A Special Thanks to our Family Sponsors who's generosity made this project a success!

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Sandy Sanford Smith & Audrey Deveaux | Scanwood Canada Ltd. | Scotia Dental | Seagers/Quinn Family | Service Canada, Regional Office | Super 8 Dartmouth  
The Smoke Shoppe | The Wood Family | Thomas Family | Zac Barkhouse & Matt Conrad







Sir Elton John is to have a street named after him. Councillors in the London borough of Harrow are considering honouring their most famous former resident following a Local Government Network report which encourages the celebration of local heroes. [FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK](http://FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK)

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

## Valkyrie lacks thriller tension

### Valkyrie

**Director:** Bryan Singer

**Stars:** Tom Cruise, Bill Nighy

**Classification:** PG

**Rating:** ●●●½

STEVE GOW  
for Metro Canada



**There's no doubt Valkyrie was an ambitiously high risk project for Tom Cruise. Why else would he be making the rounds on the talk show circuit (in Canada no less!) selling it as "great drama"? I don't recall him having to do that for Mission: Impossible III.**

The truth is, Valkyrie will likely struggle to fill theatre seats as it focuses on the true story of an assassination attempt on German dictator Adolph Hitler.

Cruise plays Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, a tragically injured soldier that joins an inside gang of Nazi conspirators to eliminate Hitler, but the group's sights are ultimately set on overthrowing his government by re-writing a

document called Operation Valkyrie.

Focusing mainly on the conspiracy's planning stages, director Bryan Singer (X-Men) has tried to design Valkyrie as a sort of suspenseful heist drama. And why not? After all, the resistance involved many high-ranking officers in Hitler's Nazi Party.

It's a fascinating, complex story and one that history buffs will surely get a kick out of but as "great drama," Valkyrie has its flaws. While Cruise is fine enough, the complexity of

many characters' motivations remain under-explored.

As well, the drama lacks the

true tension of the espionage thriller it craves to be. Perhaps that's because of the film's biggest drawback: After two hours, Valkyrie sputters to a foregone conclusion for anyone who knows Hitler's true fate.

Like Operation Valkyrie itself, sometimes the most ambitious plans go slightly awry.

**Valkyrie sputters ... for anyone who knows Hitler's true fate.**

## Button fantastical, surreal

### The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

**Director:** David Fincher

**Stars:** Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett

**Classification:** PG

**Rating:** ●●●●

STEVE GOW  
for Metro Canada



**There's a lot of talk about Brad Pitt possibly sneaking an Oscar for his role in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button. We'll have to wait and see if that happens but one thing is certain — he definitely gives the best performance of his career.**

Based on a tale by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Button tells the life story of a man who is born with the physicality of an 80-year-old but mysteriously ages in reverse, meeting impossible challenges along the way. If that vaguely sounds a bit Forrest Gumpish, don't be surprised — Gump's Eric Roth penned this human epic too.

Unlike that life-affirming Gump, Button plays up the more surreal aspects of such an odd character. While he struggles to fit in



Brad Pitt definitely gives the best performance of his career.

with other kids as a wrinkled youngster, salty sea dogs mistake him for an old codger and escort Button to brothels, hire him to work the high seas and open his eyes to a world normally reserved for jaded adults. As such, we vicariously see it through the eyes of a child and believe me, getting young ain't all its cracked up to be.

While Pitt looks amazing (he had some stunning assistance from make-up and effects), director David Fincher (Zodiac) captures

the more fantastical elements of the movie including a hilarious recurring storyline about a guy who keeps getting struck by lightning.

Ultimately, it's that culmination of bizarre subplots and side stories that distract from the emotional core and stretch Button out to a weighty sitting length. At 166 minutes, the real curious case of Benjamin Button is whether you can get to the end without a bathroom break.

## metro life panel

### Top musicians

- 1. Coldplay
- 2. Kanye West
- 3. AC/DC
- 4. Jonas Brothers
- 5. Guns N' Roses
- 6. Taylor Swift
- 7. Radiohead
- 8. Duffy
- 9. Estelle
- 10. Crystal Castles



Chris Martin from Colplay

### Top 2008 albums

- 1. Coldplay, Viva la Vida or Death And All His Friends
- 2. Bob Dylan, Tell Tale Signs — The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6
- 3. Metallica, Death Magnetic
- 4. Lil Wayne, Tha Carter III
- 5. Kathleen Edwards, Asking For Flowers

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

## "THE PERFECT FAMILY FILM!"

Mark S. Allen, CBS/CW TV

**"YOU'LL LAUGH, YOU'LL CRY, YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE WITH MARLEY!"**

Jake Hamilton, KHOU-TV (CBS), Houston

**"THE MOST LOVEABLE MOVIE THIS SEASON."**

Mark S. Allen, CBS/CW TV

**"WONDERFUL! PAWS-ITIVELY PERFECT!"**

Kara Mack, KPTV-TV, Portland

**"GREAT! PACKS AN EMOTIONAL PUNCH."**

Kevin Steiner, KTVI-TV, St. Louis



Owen Wilson Jennifer Aniston  
**Marley & Me**

FOX 2000 PICTURES AND REGENCY ENTERPRISES PRESENT A GIL NETTER/SUNSWEEP ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A DAVID FRANKEL FILM  
OWEN WILSON JENNIFER ANISTON "MARLEY & ME" ERIC DANE AND ALAN ARKIN COSTUME DESIGNER CINDY EVANS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JULIA MICHELS AND THEODORE SHAPIRO  
PRODUCED BY MARK LIVOLSI A.C.E. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FLORIAN BALLHAUS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ARNON MILCHAN JOE CARACCILO, JR.  
PRODUCED BY KAREN ROSENFELT GIL NETTER BASED UPON THE BOOK BY JOHN GROGAN SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT FRANK AND DON ROOS DIRECTED BY DAVID FRANKEL



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**STARTS TOMORROW!**

Check directory or log onto [www.empiretheatres.com](http://www.empiretheatres.com), [www.tribute.ca](http://www.tribute.ca) for locations and showtimes

## Streep, screenplay stunning in Doubt

### Doubt

**Director:** John Patrick Shanley

**Stars:** Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman

**Classification:** PG

**Rating:** ●●●●

STEVE GOW  
for Metro Canada



**Meryl Streep could read the phone book on camera and make it compelling drama. So drop the legendary thespian in a Pulitzer Prize winning play adaptation and you're almost guaranteed stunning cinema.**

Such is the case with Doubt, a slow-paced, but excellent tale about a private Catholic school under a dark shadow of wrongdoing in 1964.

Streep plays Sister Beauvier, the kind of strict principal who outlaws ballpoint pens, cough drops and dismisses Frosty the Snowman as a pagan song. After all, "He does come to life."

With one eye on her charges and the other on lenient new pastor, Father Flynn (Philip Seymour Hoffman), she warns her staff to be diligent.

When an impressionable teacher (Amy Adams) notices odd behavior between Flynn and the school's first African-American pupil, Beauvier sets out to eject



Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman star in Doubt.

the priest regardless of evidence.

Adapted from his own play, filmmaker John Patrick Shanley succeeds at creating one of the year's most intimate, character-driven dramas ripe with tension and subtext. Rich with a moral complexity that provides a great

amount of gravitas, it's the film's small, but stellar cast that circumnavigates this masterpiece.

As mentioned, Streep is stunning and should nab her 15th Oscar nomination but one cannot overlook Shanley's solid screenplay. So much for having to sit through the phone book.

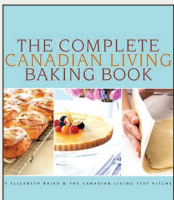


**Spears's father gets pay raise**

Britney Spears's father, Jamie Spears, just got a salary increase of about \$75 an hour. On Monday, a Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner boosted by an additional \$51,000 his payment for acting as his daughter's conservator. **PEOPLE.COM**

**Metro's 2008****Top cookbooks**

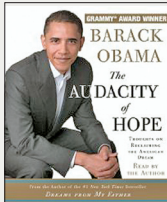
1. The Complete Canadian Living Baking Book, by Elizabeth Baird and The Canadian Living Test Kitchen
2. Just 5 Things: Easy Gourmet Cooking with just a Handful of Ingredients, by Rachel Lane
3. David Rocco's Dolce Vita, by David Rocco
4. In the Kitchen with Anna: New Ways with the Classics, by Anna Olson
5. Friday Night Dinners, by Bonnie Stern

**Top eco-products**

1. Reusable shopping bag
2. Buying local grown food
3. Taking transit
4. Compact florescent lights
5. Reusable water bottle

**metro life panel****Top books**

1. The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream, by Barack Obama
2. The Tales of Beedle the Bard, by J. K. Rowling
3. Remember Me?, by Sophie Kinsella
4. Breaking Dawn, by Stephenie Meyer
5. The Last Lecture, by Randy Pausch

**Top designers**

1. Anna Kosturova
2. Kimberley Newport-Mimran (Pink Tartan label)
3. Philippe Dubuc
4. David Dixon
5. Denis Gagnon

**Top cooking shows**

1. Jamie at Home with Jamie Oliver
2. Iron Chef America
3. The F Word with Gordon Ramsay
4. Restaurant Makeover
5. Nigella Feasts with Nigella Lawson

**Top health news**

1. Foods that help fight the flu
2. Eat more antioxidants to fight illness
3. People connect more through technology than in-person
4. Fast eaters are more likely to be obese
5. Tooth decay can be transmitted

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

**Actors union delays strike vote**

**UNCERTAINTY** Hollywood's deeply divided Screen Actors Guild said Monday it has postponed a planned strike authorization vote set to begin Jan. 2, so that it can "address the unfortunate division and restore consensus."

The delay comes after high-profile members like Tom Hanks and George Clooney lent their names to a campaign that opposed strike authorization. The "yes" side counts such stars as Mel Gibson and Martin Sheen.

"This division does not help our effort to get an agreement from the AMPTP that our members will ratify," the union's chief negotiator, Doug Allen, wrote in a letter posted on the guild's website, referring to the studios' bargaining agent, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers.

**"This division does not help our effort to get an agreement from the AMPTP that our members will ratify."**

Doug Allen

SAG has been working without a contract since its old one expired June 30. The main sticking point in the negotiations is pay for programming shown on the Internet. After a federal mediator last month failed to solve the impasse, SAG said it would seek strike authorization.

Such authorization requires 75 per cent approval. SAG has about 120,000 members, though most of them do not work full-time.

The vote has been rescheduled for a three-week period following a special national board meeting scheduled to take place Jan. 12 and 13, the union said. It is expected to take about three weeks to tally the votes.

A "yes" vote could cripple the Academy Awards in Hollywood on Feb. 22, since stars will not want to cross picket lines.

Movie making has wound down since late June in anticipation of labour strife, compounding a general slowdown from the U.S. recession.

The tension has been heightened by fatigue from a 14-week Hollywood writers strike that ended in February and cost the Los Angeles area economy around \$3 billion US as production stopped on most prime-time TV shows.

REUTERS

**Entertainment in brief**

**RADIO** Actor and former presidential candidate Fred Thompson is getting his own radio show. Westwood One said Monday that The Fred Thomp-

son Show will debut March 2, replacing The Radio Factor With Bill O'Reilly, which ends its six-year run Feb. 27. On his show, Thompson will share his

conservative views on politics, topical issues and pop culture stories as well as conduct guest interviews and take listener calls.

REUTERS

**5 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS**

**BEST PICTURE** (Drama)

**BEST DIRECTOR** David Fincher

**BEST ACTOR** (Drama) Brad Pitt

**BEST SCREENPLAY** Screenplay by Eric Roth and Robin Swicord

**BEST ORIGINAL SCORE** Alexandre Desplat

**TIME**

"A SPRAWLING, ENTHRALLING MOVIE. Opens a window onto our common mortality, where the very young and the very old are similarly dependent and the years in between are a precious gift."

—Richard Corliss

**ELLE**

"ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES OF THE DECADE. At once familiar and like nothing ever seen on screen before. The chemistry between Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett is nothing short of glorious."

—Karen Durbin

**Newsweek**

"BRAD PITT GIVES ONE OF THE SUBTLEST, MOST TOUCHING PERFORMANCES OF HIS CAREER. Lyrical, original, deeply felt."

—David Ansen

**BRAD PITT** **CATE BLANCHETT**

**The Curious Case Of BENJAMIN BUTTON**

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENT A KENNEDY/MARSHALL PRODUCTION A DAVID FINCHER FILM BRAD PITT CATE BLANCHETT "THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON" TARA J. HENSON JULIA ORMOND ELIAS KOTERS AND TILDA SWINTON MUSIC BY ALEXANDRE DESPLAT EDITOR KIRK BAXTER ANGUS WALL PRODUCED BY KATHLEEN KENNEDY FRANK MARSHALL GIAN CHAFFIN FROM THE SHORT STORY BY SCOTT FITZGERALD SCREENPLAY BY ERIC ROTH AND ROBIN SWICORD DIRECTED BY DAVID FINCHER

**IN THEATRES EVERYWHERE CHRISTMAS DAY**

CHECK THEATRE DIRECTORIES FOR LOCATIONS AND SHOWTIMES

**4 GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD NOMINATIONS**

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**"ONE OF THE BEST PICTURES OF THE YEAR!"**

**3 CRITICS' CHOICE AWARD NOMINATIONS**

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**KATE WINSLET RALPH FIENNES**

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Screen Times

New releases are highlighted in pink.

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM WED., DEC. 24 TO THURS., DEC. 25. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

HALIFAX

BAYERS LAKE

190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake  
902-876-4800

**Australia** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 9  
**Bedtime Stories** (G) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7-9:30  
**Bolt** (G) Dolby Stereo Wed 1-3:30 Dolby Stereo Thu 7-9:40  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 6:50-6:55-9:30-9:45  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed 12:40-1:05-3:20-3:35 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 7:15-10:05  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:20-12:50-3:20-3:40 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 7-9:40  
**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa** (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:10-3:40 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 6:45  
**Marley & Me** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 6:50-9:30  
**Nothing Like the Holidays** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:15-3:30  
**Punisher: War Zone** (18) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:05-3:45  
**Quantum of Solace** (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-12:45-3:15-3:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 7-9:50  
**Role Models** (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:10-3:40  
**Seven Pounds** (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed 12:45-3:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 6:50-10  
**The Spirit** (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 7:05-10  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Dolby

Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1-3:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 6:40-9:10  
**Transporter 3** (14) Dolby Stereo Wed 12:30-3:20  
**Twilight** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:05-12:30-3:05-3:15 Dolby Stereo Thu 6:50-9:50  
**Valkyrie** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 7:15-10  
**Yes Man** (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 1-3:35 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:15-9:55

IMAX

190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake  
902-876-4800

**The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-3:25 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 6:55-9:45

OXFORD THEATRE

6408 Quinpool Rd.  
902-423-7488

Listings not available at press time.

PARK LANE

5657 Spring Garden Rd.  
902-423-4860

**Bedtime Stories** (G) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:10-9:40  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:30  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:20-4:10  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Stadium Seating Wed 12:50-3:10  
**Marley & Me** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 6:45-9:20  
**Milk** (14) Stadium Seating Wed 12:20-1:3:20 Stadium Seating Thu 6:20-9:10  
**Quantum of Solace** (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:30-4:20

**Seven Pounds** (14) No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-3:30 No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7-9:50  
**The Spirit** (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 7:20-10  
**Twilight** (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 12:30-3:15  
**Valkyrie** (PG) Stadium Seating Thu 6:40-9:30  
**Yes Man** (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 1:10-3:40 No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 6:30-9

LOWER SACKVILLE

LOWER SACKVILLE

760 Sackville Dr., Downsview Plaza  
902-869-2022

**Bedtime Stories** (G) Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 12:45-3:10-7:15-9:45  
**Bolt** (G) Stadium Seating Wed 1-3:15-7:15-9:35  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 12:30-4-7:30  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Stadium Seating Wed 12:30-3:10-7-9:25 Stadium Seating Thu 9:25  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Stadium Seating Wed 12:30-3:30-7:10-9:40  
**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa** (G) Stadium Seating Sat-Wed 1-3:15-6:50-9  
**Marley & Me** (PG) Stadium Seating Thu 1-3:40-7-9:40  
**Seven Pounds** (14) Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 12:50-3:35-6:45-9:30  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Stadium Seating Wed 12:45-3-6:30-8:50 Stadium Seating Thu 12:45-3-6:30  
**Valkyrie** (PG) Stadium Seating Thu 1:10-3:50-6:50-9:30  
**Yes Man** (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed-Thu 1:15-3:45-6:40-9:15

DARTMOUTH

DARTMOUTH

650 Portland St., 902-434-4200

**Australia** (PG) Stereo Wed 1:45  
**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas** (PG) Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 2:10  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Stereo Wed 2:20 Stereo Thu 7:05-9:15  
**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa** (G) Stereo Wed 2:05  
**Quantum of Solace** (14) Stereo Thu 6:40-9  
**The Spirit** (STC) Stereo Thu 6:55-9:30  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Stereo Wed 2:30 Stereo Thu 6:50-9:05  
**Twilight** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 2 Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 6:30-9:05  
**Valkyrie** (PG) Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 6:35-9:10

DARTMOUTH CROSSING

145 Shubie Dr., Dartmouth Crossing  
902-481-3251

**Australia** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2  
**Bedtime Stories** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7-9:30  
**Bolt** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Wed 12:50-3:15-7-9:20  
**Bolt in Disney Digital 3D** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2-4:20-7:25-9:40 Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 7:05-9:40  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 8  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed 1:15-3:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 6:50-9:45  
**Doubt** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 6:40-9:15

**Four Christmases** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 12:55-3:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 7:20-9:50  
**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 1:20-3:45-7:20-9:40  
**Marley & Me** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 6:35-9:20  
**Quantum of Solace** (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Wed 12:40-3:20  
**Seven Pounds** (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 12:30-3:25-6:30-9:35 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 6:30-9:30  
**The Spirit** (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 6:25-9:10  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 1:40-4:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 7:25-9:45  
**Twilight** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-3:30  
**Valkyrie** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 6:55-10  
**Yes Man** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 1:45-4:15 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:15-9:55

TRURO

TRURO

20 Treaty Trail, Millbrook, 902-895-8020  
**Bedtime Stories** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 7-9:10  
**Bolt** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2:40  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 7:30  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 9:25

ing Thu 9:25  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 3  
**Marley & Me** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 6:50-9:30  
**Seven Pounds** (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed 2:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 6:30-9:20  
**The Spirit** (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 6:40-9  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 7:20  
**Twilight** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 2  
**Yes Man** (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Wed 2:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Thu 7:10-9:30

BRIDGEWATER

BRIDGEWATER

349 Lahave St., 902-527-4020

**Bedtime Stories** (G) No Passes Thu 6:40-9:05  
**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** (STC) No Passes Thu 7:30  
**The Day the Earth Stood Still** (PG) Wed 2:20 Thu 9:20  
**Four Christmases** (PG) Wed 2:25  
**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa** (G) Wed 2:05  
**Marley & Me** (PG) No Passes Thu 6:45-9:30  
**Seven Pounds** (14) No Passes Wed 2 No Passes Thu 6:30-9:20  
**The Spirit** (STC) Thu 6:55-9:25  
**The Tale of Despereaux** (G) Wed 2:30 Thu 7  
**Twilight** (PG) Wed 2:15  
**Yes Man** (PG) No Passes Wed 2:10 No Passes Thu 6:50-9:35

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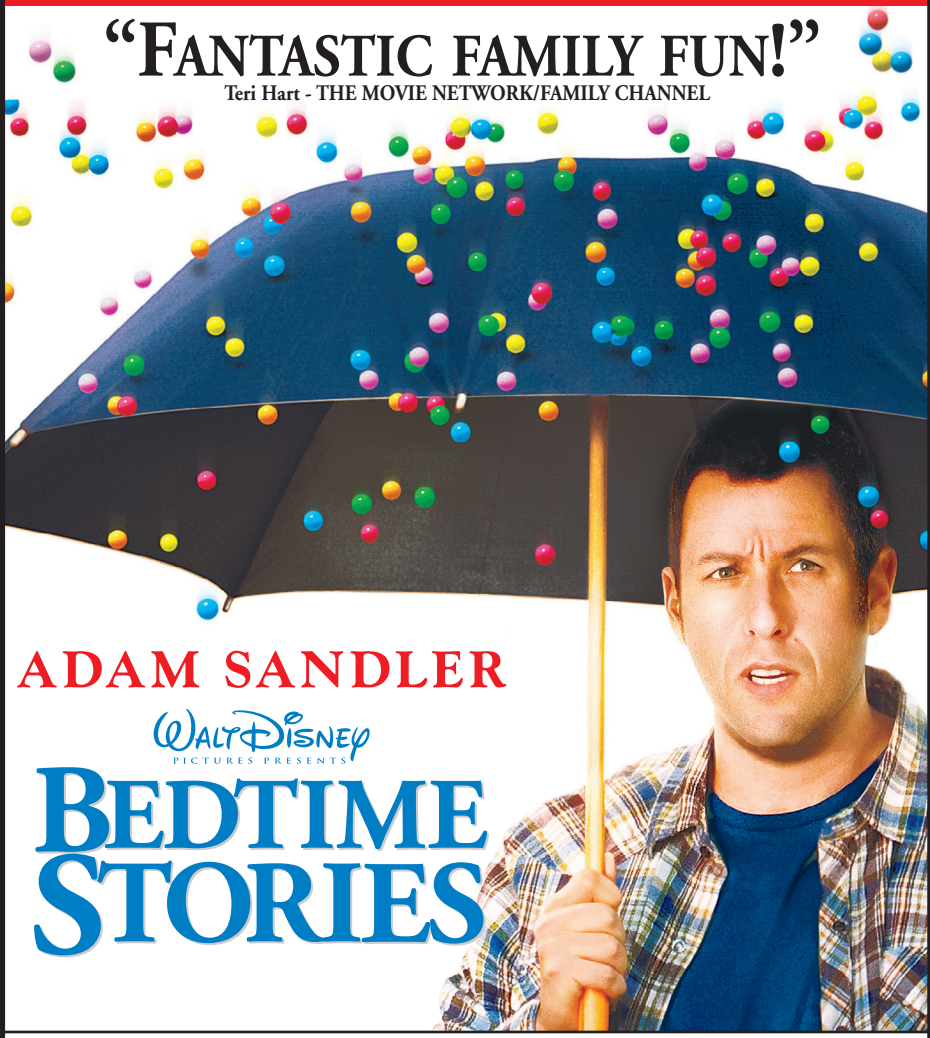
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Music careers honoured

Motown hitmakers the Four Tops, jazz pianist Hank Jones, and the late Dean Martin will receive lifetime achievement Grammy awards on Feb. 7, organizers said Monday. REUTERS

Dose of reality for 2009

IntelVision



THE FUTURE: Perhaps expecting that more people will be staying home in 2009 to

weather the anticipated economic storm, some of the networks are ramping up production on new shows to debut in the next 12 months. First there are the midseason premieres waiting to air starting in the new year: the return of Idol, Lost and 24, and cable hits like Nip/Tuck and Damages, plus new shows like The Beast on A&E, TNT's Trust

Me, and United States Of Tara on Showtime, starring Toni Collette.

There are the supersized episodes of Celebrity Apprentice in March, and a deluge of reality shows coming from MTV — 16 in total, according to a Variety story, from producers such as Matt Stone, Trey Parker and Sean Combs. Oxygen has a dancing-plus-fitness reality title called Dance Your Ass Off, VH1 has Sober House, a Celebrity Rehab spin-off with Andy Dick and Rodney King, and Starz has Party Down, a comedy about a bunch of wannabes working for an L.A. catering company from Veronica Mars creator Rob Thomas.

HBO looks like it's doubling down, after a post-Sopranos ratings slump and an executive shake up, with new shows announced every day. There are two comedies — How To Make It In America and Bored To Death — and Cocaine Cowboys, a fictionalized remake of the 2006 documentary about Miami's blow trade. HBO is turning another documentary — American Pimp (1999) — into Gentlemen Of Leisure, the story of a pimp in his 40s trying to get out of the business.

Finally, there's Hung, a new show from The Riches creator Dmitry Lipkin. It stars Thomas Jane as a high school basketball coach who tries to ride out economic hard times with his sole physical asset — the nature of which should be obvious. "It has its sexual moments, but the show is very much about what's happening in the country, how people are trying to survive using what God had given them," Lipkin told the Hollywood Reporter.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.



Top 2008 TV shows

- 1. So You Think You Can Dance (Canada)
- 2. Dexter
- 3. So You Think You Can Dance (U.S.)
- 4. Mad Men
- 5. Battlestar Galactica
- 6. Gene Simmons' Family Jewels
- 7. South Park
- 8. Entourage
- 9. Kenny Vs. Spenny
- 10. Metalocalypse

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

Top 2008 TV actors

- 1. Michael C. Hall (Dexter)
- 2. Jeremy Piven (Entourage)
- 3. Kat Deeley (So You Think You Can Dance U.S.)
- 4. Shannon Tweed (Gene Simmons Family Jewels)
- 5. Michael Hogan (Battlestar Galactica)
- 6. Jon Hamm (Mad Men)
- 7. Spencer Rice (Kenny Vs. Spenny)
- 8. Elizabeth Moss (Mad Men)
- 9. John Slattery (Mad Men)
- 10. Christina Hendricks (Mad Men)



See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Kenya talks to singer Fergie about make up, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle



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critics'corner

Borrowed Hearts

It seems almost sacrilegious to pan this 1997 drama, what with the angelic Roma Downey in the cast and all. But its very concept is unsettling. A businessman (Eric McCormack) needs to pretend he's a family man to impress a potential client, so he asks an employee (Downey) and her daughter to pose as his wife and kid. 10 PM on W



It's a Wonderful Life

Yes, it was just on. But now that this 1946 holiday classic isn't being screened around the clock anymore, it doesn't hurt to give folks a couple of chances to watch it — especially on Christmas Eve. James Stewart is unforgettable as the financially ruined family man who wants to end it all ... until an apprentice angel (Henry Travers) shows him how much worse off the world would be without him. Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore also star. 7 PM on CBC, 9 PM on NBC

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens' evergreen classic about the spiritual conversion of Ebenezer Scrooge has been adapted and readapted, but perhaps never better than in this flavorful 1951 version seasoned by Alastair Sim's unforgettable work in the central role. Watch for Patrick Macnee of "The Avengers" in the supporting cast. 9 PM on CJCH

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/24/08	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC Wild News	Holiday Lights Cast members.	The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)				
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye	Home for the Holidays (2005, Drama)	Sean Young.			Atlantis
	11	11	11	CBC	It's a Wonderful Life **** (1946, Comedy-Drama)	James Stewart, Donna Reed.				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	2	2	2	CBC-F	Union-force	Pyramide (SC)	Antarctique	Voyage au pays imaginaire *** (2004, Drame) (SC)		Louez un mari		Le Téléjournal
	32	32	32	CBS	News (N)	Evening News	The Insider (N)	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: NY
	69	69	69	CFTM	TVA 18 heures	Les Gags	Km/h (N) (SC)	Poule-oeufs or				TVA 22 heures
	6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (HDTV PA)	Bones (HDTV PA)		Painkiller Jane		18th-Cmas
	9	9	9	CJCH	Corner Gas	Hollywood	Rita MacNeil's Christmas	A Christmas Carol *** (1951, Fantasy)	Alastair Sim.			News (N)
	10	10	10	ELTV	(6) EastLink Television							
	36	36	36	FOX	Deal-No Deal	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones (HDTV PA)	Bones (HDTV PA)		Fox First
primetime	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Hollywood	Extra (N)	It's a Wonderful Life **** (1946, Comedy-Drama)	James Stewart.		
	29	29	29	NW	World News	Business	CBC News	Fortune	The Hour	CBC News: The National		Queen: Reign
	4	4	4	PBS-B	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Greater Boston	Ask This Old	Christmas-Mormon Choir	Christmas at Luther			Renaissance
	35	35	35	PBS-D	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Christmas-Mormon Choir	Happy Holidays			Faith Hill, Joy
	68	68	68	TQS	(6:30) Le Retour (SC)		Chemin du golf	Rire et délire	Les Douze veilles de Noël (2004, Drame)	Steven Weber. (SC)		110 pour cent
	23	96	96	BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call	Commodities	Workopolis TV	Business News	Squeeze Play	Market Call
	18	18	18	CNN	(5) The Situation Room		CNN Presents "Obama Revealed" Sen. Barack Obama.			Larry King Live		CNN Presents
	54	54	54	GOLF	Big Break: Ka'anapali		Big Break: Ka'anapali		Big Break: Ka'anapali		Big Break: Ka'anapali	Big Break
	52	52	52	RSE	Prime Time Sports		Best Damn Top 50 Blunders		Sportsnet 10th Anniversary		Best Damn Sports Show	Anniversary
	55	55	55	SCOR	Top 50 Plays of the Year		Hockey Talk	Cabbie's Top	Gerry Dee	Score Morning	08 Wrap	NFL Films on the Score
sports	45	45	45	SPD	SuperCars	SuperCars	SuperCars	SuperCars	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)
	53	53	53	TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	SportsCentre: Year in Review		College Football Sheraton Hawaii Bowl -- Hawaii vs. Notre Dame.			
	43	43	43	FAM	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek
	44	44	44	TOON	(6:30) Jack Frost ** (1998, Fantasy)		Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show	Looney Tunes Christmas			Futurama	The Critic
	26	26	26	TREE	Max & Ruby	Toot & Puddle: Christmas	Night Grdn	Emily Yeung	Franklin	Fourth King	Backyardigans	Comfy Couch
	27	27	27	YTV	The Nutcracker		Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town	He-Man, She-Ra Christmas	Weird Years	Martin Mystery	Martin Mystery	Martin Mystery
	16	16	16	A&E	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Parking Wars
	70	70	70	APTN	News		Canadian Geographic		APTN National News: Contact		Luna: Spirit of the Whale (2007, Docudrama)	
	50	50	50	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live (N)			ATL ** (2006, Comedy-Drama)	Tip "T.I." Harris, Lauren London.			Brother
	37	37	37	BRVO	Street Legal		Desperate Housewives	Trans-Siberian Orchestra	Wingfield	Cmas Music	Christmas	Christmas
family	25	25	25	CMT	Three Wishes		Donner Down	The Gift	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Hope & Faith
	49	49	49	COM	Colbert Christmas: Gift		Jeff Dunham's Very Special Christmas Special				The Simpsons	South Park
	153	153	153	COURT	Missing Link		The Investigators		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Spy Web: The CIA	Investigators
	38	38	38	DISC	Monster Moves		Monster Moves		Monster Moves		Monster Moves	Monster Moves
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes		House Hunters	Property Virgin	My Parents' House: Holidays		Holiday Windows 2008	Design Inc.
	46	46	46	HIST	In Search of Santa Claus		NCIS "Head Case"		Cities of the Underworld		In Search of Santa Claus	NCIS
	17	17	17	MM	The O.C. "The Escape"		The O.C. "The Rescue"		The O.C. "The Heights"		The O.C.	The O.C.
	19	19	19	MMM	Fabulous Life Of...		Fabulous Life Of...		Fabulous Life Of...		Fabulous Life Of...	All-Time 10
	201	201	201	M1	(6:15) Charlotte's Web		Eragon ** (2006, Fantasy)	Ed Speleers, Jeremy Irons.	Night at the Museum (2006, Fantasy)			
	48	23	23	OLN	American Gladiators		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Mantracker	Bounty Hunter
cable variety	51	51	51	PEACH	Seinfeld	Friends	House-Payne	House-Payne	The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)		Seinfeld	Family Guy
	206	206	206	PIX	(6) The Fifth Element		(8:10) The Nutty Professor *** (1963, Comedy)				Rat Race ** (2001, Comedy)	
	67	67	67	RDI	Le Journal RDI	RDI en direct	RDI en direct	Chine	Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)	RDI en direct
	39	39	39	SHOW	EastEnders	Saxondale	The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002, Docudrama), Ed Asner				Trailer Park Boys Christmas	Say Goodnight
	40	40	40	SLICE	X-Weighted "Angela J."		Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	X-Weighted		Real Housewives of OC	Cattle Drive
	47	47	47	SPACE	Stargate SG-1		Trekies 2 ** (2004, Documentary)				Star Trek: The Motion Picture ** (1979)	
	14	14	14	SPIKE	Pros vs. Joes		Pros vs. Joes		Pros vs. Joes		Pros vs. Joes	Pros vs. Joes
	57	98	98	STAR	Corner Gas	Hollywood	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		TMZ (N)	Pink: etalk	Relative Madness	Tonight Show
	21	21	21	TLC	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids and Counting		17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count
	56	34	34	TROP	Married... With	Frasier	Frasier	Raymond	Raymond	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show
TV5	20	20	20	TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	Toute une histoire		Les Années bonheur			The Nanny
	28	28	28	V	Side Effects		Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	A Christmas Carol ** (1984, Fantasy)	
	60	97	97	VIVA	Mysterious Ways		Judging Amy		Commander in Chief		The West Wing	Mediums
	22	22	22	W	All She Wants for Christmas		Friends	Will & Grace	Shopping Bags	Shopping Bags	Borrowed Hearts (1997, Drama)	Roma Downey.
	251	251	251	WGN	Be-Millionaire	Evening News	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	The Flight Before Christmas		The Story of Santa Claus	WGN News





Britney Spears has reportedly parted ways with her long-term choreographers. The singer has worked with Wade Robson and Andre Fuentes since 1999 and 1998, respectively. [FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK](http://FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK)

## Celebrity Buzz

### Hudson vows to stay a single girl

**PEOPLE** Kate Hudson informed the January issue of *In Style* that she's "made a conscious decision to try to stay single as long as possible," [msn.com](http://msn.com) reports.

Still, it's suspected she's back with ex Owen Wilson, a mole maintains. "They've been quietly seeing each other and hooking up ... But I don't see it being a monogamous thing yet."

Kate explains her dating outlook to the Sunday Times magazine: "I got into this very controversial thing once with Access Hollywood ... I was married at the time, and I was asked, 'Do you think monogamy is possible?' And I said, 'No, I don't think we're made up to be monogamous: We are animals.' So I would be doing myself a disservice by saying monogamy is going to be easy."



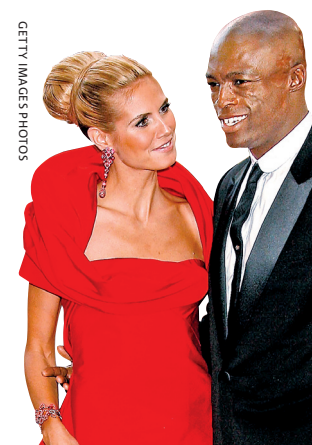
METRO NEWS SERVICES

### Klum and Seal a pair of lovebirds

**RELATIONSHIP** Heidi Klum and Seal attended an intimate dinner party at West Hollywood's Chateau Marmont earlier this week, [people.com](http://people.com) reports. The couple sat on the hotel's patio, and acted "very cozy with each other," an onlooker says.

The pair sat at the table with five friends and laughed and chatted for hours. Klum sipped wine with one hand, while keeping the other firmly on Seal's knee. Every once in a while, Seal would lean over and kiss his wife on the cheek. Says the onlooker: "It was very sweet."

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GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

## A domesticated Jessica wants baby

**PEOPLE** Jessica Simpson is "actively trying" for a baby, [femalefirst.co.uk](http://femalefirst.co.uk) reports.

The singer is reportedly desperate to start a family with her American football star boyfriend Tony Romo after her younger sister Ashlee gave birth to her first child, son Bronx Mowgli, last month.

A source told gossip blogger Perez Hilton: "I wouldn't be surprised if Jessica makes an announcement that she's pregnant very, very soon."

Meanwhile, the singer has revealed that the festive period has made her become more domesticated.



She said: "My personality is now more stay-at-home — right now I'm doing the Christmas tree and everything. I'm in Dallas and its fun, Tony hasn't had Christmas in seven years because they have football every Christmas and he can't go home. So I'm bringing Christmas to him this year."

"Believe it or not, I like to bake pies. Tony's favourite is pumpkin pie and I haven't mastered that yet. Maybe I'm more of a baker — I like to make cakes, more fattening."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

## Ritchie rebuffs rebound rumours

**DATING** Guy Ritchie is not dating Gemma Khan, [femalefirst.co.uk](http://femalefirst.co.uk) reports.

The RocknRolla director sparked rumours he was in a relationship with Gemma after the pair were seen attending a series of parties together over the last month, but it has now been claimed they are simply friends.

A source close to Guy said: "It's not romantic, they are both with the same PR company and the two times they have been together recently were at work events. They have always got along well and have known each other for years."

However, pals

are still hoping their friendship might develop into romance: "Could they date in the future? I don't know. In the past they have only seen each other when they have been in relationships, so the thought of being romantic or dating has never had the opportunity to arise."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



## Jackson in fine health: Doctor

**PEOPLE** Michael Jackson's representative has denied the singer is suffering from a potentially deadly genetic disease, insisting he is in "fine health," [femalefirst.co.uk](http://femalefirst.co.uk) reports.

The 50-year-old singer's spokesman Dr. Tohme Tohme has dismissed claims made by biographer Ian Halperin that the Thriller star is close to death because he is battling inherited condition A1AD (alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency) which leaves sufferers without a protein needed to protect the lungs.

Tohme in-

sists Michael is in such good health he is even planning a world tour and several TV appearances for 2009.

The representative said: "The wild allegations concerning Mr. Jackson's health are a total fabrication. Concerning this author's allegations, we would hope in the future that legitimate media will not continue to be exploited by such an obvious attempt to promote this unauthorized 'biography.'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES



## Pete dishes on breast milk and parenthood

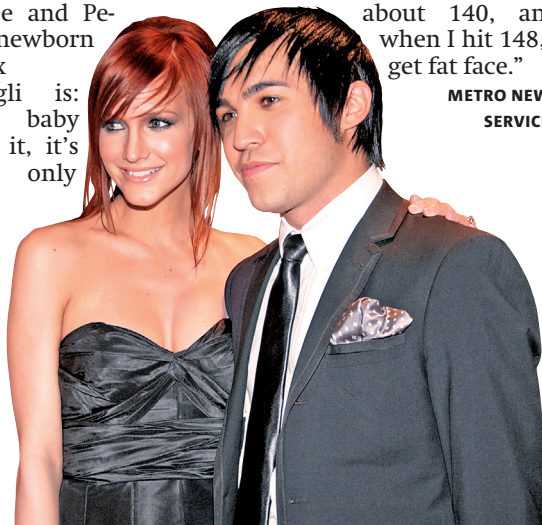
**FAMILY** Pete Wentz revealed that wife Ashlee Simpson's breast milk tastes "sour" and "weird" on SIRIUS' The Morning Mash Up! on Monday, [usweekly.com](http://usweekly.com) reports.

The Fall Out Boy bassist, 29, may not be a fan, but Ashlee and Pete's newborn Bronx Mowgli is: "The baby loves it, it's the only

thing he's had a chance to have."

Wentz went on to reveal that Ashlee isn't the only Wentz to put on some pregnancy weight: "I gained 10 pounds at least. I usually hang out around 135, 134, I go up to about 140, and when I hit 148, I get fat face."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



## Cox a believer in making marriage work

**MARRIAGE** Courteney Cox and David Arquette are committed to making their marriage work, [usweekly.com](http://usweekly.com) reports.

"I get shocked by people getting divorced all the time, that's why I choose to work on it. Therapy helps us," Cox told the UK's Mail on Sun-

day. "It's so easy to grow apart; marriage takes work. I suppose you can work it out by talking to each other — I would just prefer to have a referee, it reminds us why we're together."

Cox's parents divorced when she was a child. "Before my dad died, he said one of his big regrets was that he hadn't worked on their marriage enough."

"I don't know what the future's going to hold, but divorce isn't really an option," she said.

Asked if it's difficult working with her husband of nine years, who is also an actor, Cox said, "It seems like it would be the worst thing in the world but we manage to handle it really well. We argue, but never about work. We love being together."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



### Complicated holiday affair for Moss household

**PEOPLE** Kate Moss has angered partner Jamie Hince by inviting her ex-boyfriend to spend Christmas with her, [femalefirst.co.uk](http://femalefirst.co.uk) reports.

The supermodel is keen to spend time with Jefferson Hack over the festive season for the sake of their six-year-old daughter Lila Grace, but Jamie is said to be furious.

This means inviting both Lila's dad, Jefferson, and her boyfriend, Jamie to her Cotswolds home — no matter what the consequences, Kate has also invited Jefferson's girlfriend Anouck Lepere to spend the day with them, and is determined to make it as special as possible for Lila.

The source adds: "It may be a little awkward and there are bound to be squabbles, but Kate reckons as long as she acts as a buffer, all will be fine."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



### Heidi and Spencer talk kids, in-laws

**PEOPLE** Will newlyweds Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt soon welcome a newborn? And does Heidi's mom really dislike Spencer? One of the most talked-about couples on TV told all to Ryan Seacrest on his radio show, [msn.com](http://msn.com) is reporting.

When Seacrest asked the couple on his KIIS-FM radio show whether Heidi's mom disapproves of Heidi's marriage with Spencer, the reality starlet said her mother's comments were "kinda taken out of context. She was more joking around. She loves Spencer."

Ryan also wondered if Heidi and Spencer plan on having children. "We definitely need a kid, ASAP," Spencer said.

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For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: [metronews.ca/food](http://metronews.ca/food)

Take Five

1	2	3			4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13					14			
15					16					17			
18				19				20					
				21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30						31		32			
33				34					35		36		
37				38		39				40			
41					42		43						
				44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52					53	54			55		
56						57					58		
59						60					61		

### Sudoku

**HOW TO PLAY:** Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

			9					
		2		5		3		
		3	1				5	8
6		8			2			4
5								9
7			8			5		1
1	4				9	2		
		6		4		1		
					3			

### Crossword across

- 1 Type squares  
4 Spring  
8 Saharan  
12 Sweet potato  
13 Aware of  
14 — contendere  
15 Id counterpart  
16 Dime portrait  
18 Not limp  
20 Tackle moguls  
21 Exploding star  
24 Nudge  
28 Midwestern farmland  
32 Rescue  
33 Wanted-poster letters  
34 Ann —, Mich.
- 36 — -relief  
37 Vivacity, in music  
39 Deli lunch order  
41 Taco topping  
43 Apportion  
44 Expert  
46 Battery terminal  
50 Sincere  
55 Exclude  
56 Anger  
57 Dog bane  
58 “— Impossible”  
59 Remain  
60 Revue segment  
61 Make lace

### Crossword down

- 1 Watchful one  
2 Creche trio  
3 Urban pall  
4 City in Argentina  
5 Lennon’s lady  
6 Judge Lance  
7 Privation  
8 Blacksmiths’ blocks  
9 Caviar essence  
10 Not up to par  
11 Morse “E”  
17 — out a living  
19 Hostel  
22 Perp. to hor.  
23 Photo book  
25 Infant  
26 Ellipse  
27 TV Batman portrayer
- 28 City fleet  
29 Gumbo base  
30 Form of transportation  
31 Colour quality  
35 Drumming noise  
38 Fish-eating hawk  
40 Chaps  
42 Illustrations  
45 Slays, “Sopranos” style  
47 Last write-up  
48 Computer fodder  
49 Formerly, formerly  
50 Storefront sign abbr.  
51 Chow down  
52 — Khan  
53 Wapiti  
54 Wahine’s garland

#### PREVIOUS DAY’S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

C	U	E	D		T	W	A	S		S	I	T
A	R	E	A		H	A	L	E		A	D	O
P	I	N	S	T	R	I	P	E		F	E	W
			H	A	U	L		P	A	E	A	N
T	A	P	E	D		E	A	S				
E	N	I	D		L	A	N	G	S	Y	N	E
A	N	N		S	O	L	V	E		P	E	D
M	O	N	O	P	O	L	Y		B	I	R	D
		U	P	O	N			H	A	N	D	Y
T	E	M	P	O		A	M	E	N			
O	R	B		F	I	R	I	N	G	P	I	N
A	G	E		E	R	I	E		L	A	T	E
D	O	R		D	E	A	N		E	L	S	E

Find today’s answers + play more games at [metronews.ca](http://metronews.ca)

<b>SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:</b>	17-21 min Smart
Under 13 min Genius	21-25 min Not bad
13-17 min Scholar	25+ min Keep practising

### Metro Recipe of the Day



### Cod steaks with creamy broccoli

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 4 fresh cod steaks, about 6 oz (170 g) each
  - 2 tbsp (25 mL) extra virgin olive oil
  - Salt and black pepper
  - 1 shallot
  - 3/4 lb (335 g) broccoli florets
  - 10 sprigs of fresh tarragon
  - 3/4 cup (200 mL) whipping cream

- METHOD:**
- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Dry cod steaks, then brush with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of oil and season well.
  - Cut four pieces of foil, each large enough to enclose a steak. Put one steak on each piece of foil, fold edges together to make a roomy parcel, and crimp to seal. Lay steaks on baking sheet and cook for 15 minutes.
  - Meanwhile, peel and grate shallot. Rinse broccoli and trim into small florets.
  - Heat remaining oil in frying pan and fry shallot until translucent.

- Add broccoli to pan, stems down, with 2/3 cup (150 mL) of water, and bring to boil, then cover and simmer for 4-5 minutes until broccoli is barely tender. Remove lid, raise heat, and cook until only 1–2 tbsp (25 mL) of water remain in pan. Do not let broccoli burn.
- Rinse and dry tarragon. Reserve four sprigs as garnish, then strip leaves off the rest and add to broccoli. Stir in cream, season to taste with salt and pepper, and keep warm.
- Remove foiled steaks from oven, unwrap, and transfer onto four warmed plates. Spoon broccoli over fish, garnish with tarragon, and serve.

**SERVES 4**

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to [rd.ca](http://rd.ca) or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

- ARIES**  
**MARCH 21-APRIL 20**  
 Have a health problem checked out. Get resentment off your chest before you explode. Take radical action, if necessary.

**LIBRA**  
**SEPT 23-OCT 23**  
 You need to get away. You've got nothing to left to lose. An appreciative person responds to an invitation.
- TAURUS**  
**APRIL 21-MAY 21**  
 A quarrelsome person is being selfish. Tasks will blunt the impact of a fantasy romance. Get cracking on solving a puzzling predicament.

**SCORPIO**  
**OCT 24-NOV 22**  
 Listen carefully to a battle plan. Hopes can now bloom into reality. An aloof person has confidence in a rebel.
- GEMINI**  
**MAY 22-JUNE 21**  
 A headstrong person refuses to co-operate. A financial rumour causes a fleeting anxiety attack. A chatty friend criticizes your talent for rejection.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
**NOV 23-DEC 21**  
 Your amusement reaches new heights. Organization is crucial to efficiency. A pragmatic person wants to show devotion.
- CANCER**  
**JUNE 22-JULY 22**  
 Continue to have faith in your instincts. Too many coincidences will raise eyebrows. Friends are waiting for promises to be kept.

**CAPRICORN**  
**DEC 22-JAN 20**  
 A hypercritical person throws a wrench into plans. Avoid disturbing the peace by rushing in to fix things. Use your imagination to find satisfaction.
- LEO**  
**JULY 23-AUG 23**  
 Give a needy person a handout. Something's got to give in a miserable relationship. Make a break for freedom.

**AQUARIUS**  
**JAN 21-FEB 18**  
 A delightful answer will be given. Pamper yourself with treats. Your achievement impresses everyone.
- VIRGO**  
**AUG 24-SEPT 22**  
 A fateful encounter with a dutiful man takes place. There'll be a lot of stress involved. Avoid mindless chit-chat with a passionate person.

**PISCES**  
**FEB 19-MARCH 20**  
 A pesky little pest must be confronted. An interfering hypocrite comes to grief. You can anticipate a change in strategy.

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**WORDY GURDY**  
 BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

- Tiny Xmas evergreen in Scotland (1)
- Didn't make it onto Santa's agenda (1)
- "Deck the halls" bough absurdity (2)
- Potter's dirt in Santa's vehicle (1)
- Actor Ledger's Christmas garlands (1)
- Brawls over Christmas bulbs for trimming (1)
- Yuletide Kriss's one-dollar bills (2)

**ANSWERS**  
 1. WE THREE 2. MISSED LIST 3. HOLLY FOLLY 4. SLEIGH CLAY  
 5. HEATHS WREATHS 6. LIGHTS FIGHTS 7. KRINGLETS SINGLES  
 12-24-08

**This day in history**

DEC. 24, 1906: Reginald Fessenden transmits the first radio broadcast; consisting of a poetry reading, a violin solo, and a speech.

DEC. 24, 1914: During World War I, the "Christmas truce" begins.

DEC. 24, 1943: In World War II, U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower becomes the Supreme Allied Commander.

DEC. 24, 1968: The crew of Apollo 8 enters into orbit around the Moon, becoming the first humans to do so. They performed 10 lunar orbits and broadcast live TV pictures that became the famous Christmas Eve Broadcast, one of the most watched programs in history.

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